

## SOME ASPECTS OF THE MODERN NOVEL

3035



*Entered as Second Class Mail Matter.*

J. J. Arakelyan, Printer, 295 Congress St., Boston.

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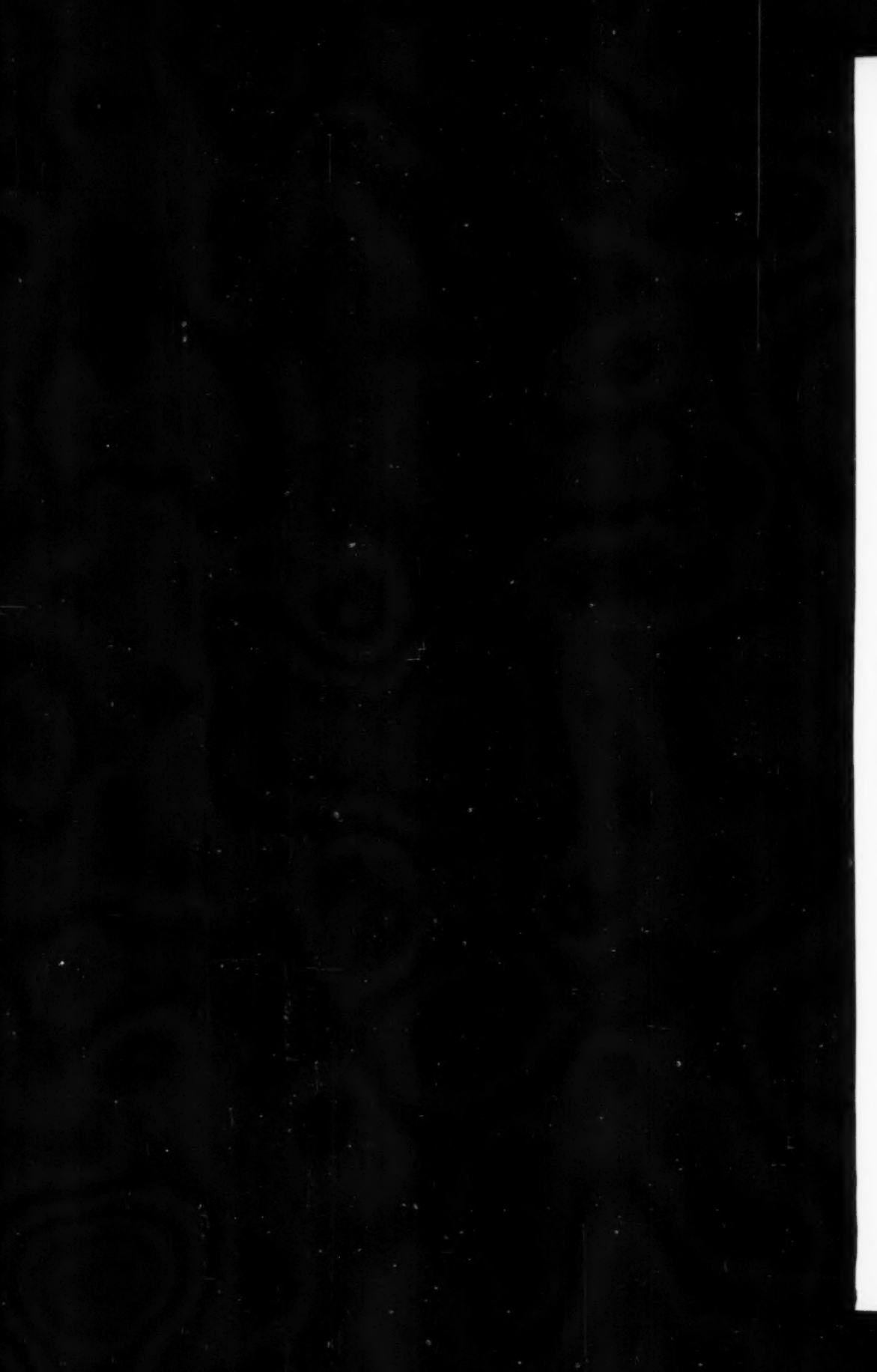
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# THE LIVING AGE:

A Weekly Magazine of Contemporary Literature and Thought.

(FOUNDED BY E. LITTELL IN 1844.)

SEVENTH SERIES  
VOLUME XVI.

NO. 3035. SEPT. 6, 1902.

FROM BEGINNING  
Vol. CXXXIV.

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## SOME ASPECTS OF THE MODERN NOVEL.\*

A great and portentous change is passing over the character and spirit of English literature. The startling development of our social civilization, which has advanced with an increasing rate of progression during the last half-century, has nowhere produced more significant results than in the field of letters. Old lines of demarcation, which severed the sphere of the novel from adjacent realms of authorship, are being rapidly obliterated, and an army of novelists invades territories hitherto held the special province of the scientist, the moral philosopher, the historian, and even the theologian. Works of fiction, treating of every conceivable subject, flood the book market, and the stream swells yearly in volume and rapidity. The ubiquity of fiction is manifest in every

direction—in the new publishing houses which have sprung into the front rank through the almost exclusive publication of books of this class, and in their intrusion into hitherto unwonted prominence in the advertising columns of those long-standing and stately firms which we have been accustomed to associate only with the issue of works of serious and standard value. Statesmen do not disdain to employ the leisure which the Front Opposition bench affords in criticism or appreciation of outstanding romances; and purple patches, culled from them, though not always openly acknowledged, find their place in pulpit utterances. The novel in varied guise, as short or serial story, forms the staple of the more popular magazines, and elaborate discussions of the

\* 1 "Audrey." By Mary Johnston, Author of "By Order of the Company" and "The Old Dominion." (London: Constable and Co., 1902.)

2 "The Lady Paramount." By Henry Harland, Author of "The Cardinal's Snuff-Box." (London: John Lane, 1902.)

3 "The Hound of the Baskervilles. Another Adventure of Sherlock Holmes." By A. Conan Doyle, Author of "Micah Clarke, &c." (London: George Newnes, 1902.)

4 "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush." By Ian Maclaren, with eight illustrations from etchings by William Hole, R. S. A. Thirteenth edition, completing the ninetyeth thousand. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901.)

5 "A Window in Thrums." By J. M. Barrie, with twelve illustrations from etchings by William Hole, R. S. A. Eighteenth edition. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902.)

6 "Colloquies of Criticism; or Literature and Democratic Patronage." (London: Fisher Unwin, 1901.)

7 "William Black, Novelist." A biography by Wemyss Reid, Author of "Life of the Right Hon. W. E. Forster" and "Life, Letters and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes, First Lord Houghton. (London: Cassell and Co. and Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1902.)

foremost writers of fiction and their works are interspersed amongst articles on the deepest problems—political, economical, and social—in the highest-class reviews. Even the newspaper press—the proud aristocrat of contemporary democratic civilization—pays its court to fiction, and relies upon its aid to promote and sustain its weekly circulation. Among all classes, rich and poor, learned and simple, in these days of universal rudimentary education the novel sweeps the field.

Let anyone take up at random the notices of novels for a single month—say in the *Times* Literary Supplement—and he will gain some conception of the variety and extent of topics embraced in the modern novel. Here is such an illustration gathered from very recent numbers. The writers range from Venice to the Pampas, from the Essex coast to the gum country of New Zealand, from wild Welsh mountains to cosy riverside villas on the Thames, from Finland to the United States of North America, from the dwellers in New Grub Street to the Teutonic Knights of the Cross in the Polish Marches. The characters delineated and the incidents portrayed are as widely diversified as the scenes on which they are made to play their parts. We know nothing to which we can compare the industry of modern novelists in their search after fresh materials to work upon, save the indefatigable enthusiasm with which the scientific naturalist ransacks the remotest corners of unknown and virgin regions in quest of a fresh orchid or some uncatalogued lepidoptera. It might have been supposed that all available material was long since exhausted; but whilst real genius will always prove “the old, old story” to be worth retelling, modern ingenuity finds topics for imaginative handling in the most unpromising di-

rections—in the Zionist Movement, for example, in the *fin de siècle* company promoter, in the Tammany ring, in the wild ravings of a half-insane gum-digger, in the dissection and display of the innermost heart of a solitary Spanish priest “unhinged by vain passion and wandering amongst the dying gods of dead civilization.” The area over which the modern novelist roams is illimitable, and it will take ages before he will have to sit down and weep that no more worlds are left for him to conquer.

The future student of our time will mark with curious interest this singular feature of our literary development. The modern novel is not only ubiquitous, it is omnivorous, and apparently exhausts the literary productiveness of the day. An age of unexampled intellectual activity, as witnessed in the unceasing issue of new books, is for the moment barren of sterling literature. Since Tennyson and Browning we have no great poet; since Gardiner, Creighton, and Stubbs no great historian. Outstanding books on theology or moral philosophy, or, since Darwin and Tyndal and Huxley have gone from us, even on the physical science which is the boast of our era, are conspicuous by their absence. Ours is an epoch of criticism and commentaries, of minor poems and *vers de société*, of associated essays and tentative suggestions, of popular handbooks and co-operative dictionaries, of specialist periodicals, of dainty editions and aesthetic picture-books. The one section of contemporary authorship which manifests originality and vitality, and which commands and satisfies the public ear, to the exclusion of more solid thought and to the serious detriment (in many of its forms) of the national character, is the modern novel. Is this a sign of growing declension, of a civilization on the verge of decay; or is it only a

passing phase, to be succeeded by a more robust and vigorous outgrowth? We would fain believe the latter, although we confess to serious misgivings. In any case the existing state of things deserves careful study.

For the influence of the modern novel is not merely to be measured by the width of the area it occupies, but also by the enormous crops which are raised in its varied and fertile fields. We have no trustworthy statistics of the total circulation of works of fiction in this country to set before our readers, but it is certain that millions of copies in the aggregate are issued annually of the more popular stories, and the gross total must reach a stupendous figure. The gradual broadening-down of the consumption may be traced in the universal abandonment of the old three volumes, published at the aristocratic price of a guinea and a half, to the prevailing middle-class issue at six shillings, and thence, again, to the teeming millions at the cost of sixpence or even less. Yet at these prices the supply hardly equals the demand. Cheap editions, which can be remunerative only when put forth in large numbers, are speedily exhausted. Hundreds of thousands at the higher price are called for as soon as any book becomes famous or infamous amongst a public whose first desire is for stimulating pabulum. A good hit means at least a satisfactory balance at the writer's bankers—not seldom, a substantial fortune.

We are naturally curious to know how this enormous mass of fiction is absorbed. The majority of the "upper ten" and the great body of educated people do not purchase their novels, but are content to have them through subscriptions to Smith's or Mudie's or some provincial circulating library. How, then, are we to account for the scores and hundreds of thousands of copies in which the works of the most

popular novelists teem from the press? The answer is supplied in *Colloquies of Criticism*. The gigantic supply corresponds to a demand made by a vast middle-class, the inmates of the countless villas recently built on the outskirts of every town in England and the creation of the last thirty-five years. According to this writer's computation, "the upper fifty thousand, if one may call them so, are, as related to this novel-reading public as a whole, in a proportion of not more than one to forty-four" (p. 11), whilst behind these again there is another section of society in fairly comfortable circumstances which in this country numbers more than six hundred thousand. This sudden apparition of a new class of readers has completely upset the balance of criticism which prevailed a generation ago, and the reading world of that day forms hardly a hundredth part of the public by whom the fate of the modern novel is decided. This is a fact of the most profound significance in determining the character and influence of contemporary fiction.

For, with the change of audience, a corresponding change has passed over the spirit and tone of the piece presented for its approval. The new public has neither the homogeneity of social sympathy nor the unity of social vision which are marked characteristics of those whom it has largely superseded. Whilst life among the latter class has, beneath all superficial differences, a substantial uniformity, and whilst social intercourse amongst its members is regulated by the thousand impalpable conventionalities begotten of generations of high-breeding and the *nuances* of expression and manner which it instinctively yet rigorously exacts, the new public has no like common bond of union, no such common standpoint of judgment, no similar universal standard of pro-

priety and manners. For this new public the novel, the author of the *Colloquies of Criticism* insists, supplies that unity of vision which their predecessors unconsciously acquire in the ordinary intercourse of daily life. It consequently takes its novels far more seriously and values them more highly; but it demands, on the other hand, that a work, to be really popular, should be written from its own social standpoint.

This fact suggests the further thought that the modern novel is liable to a disadvantage to which fiction in earlier days was not exposed. Paradoxical as it may seem, one of the deadliest injuries to works of imagination arises from their unparalleled commercial success. The immense sums netted by popular novelists naturally have a tendency to divert the attention of writers from devotion to what is highest to that which will secure the largest pecuniary profit. It has been forcibly said that "when literature has been degraded to the purpose of amusing the public, and when mental endowment and words of the highest meaning have been profaned by men ignorant of the significance even of their own powers, there flows forth a stream of intellectual life through society cut off from its true fountain and diverted from its proper object." With the prevailing adoration of wealth and its accompanying universal indulgence in lavish expenditure, the temptation to prostitute literary talent to the production of work that will command the widest sale is almost overpowering. The modern novelist is exceptionally exposed to this temptation, as his lot is cast in days "when the intellect is vexed with the spur of competition, and the inspiration of heaven is bargained away in the dearest market."

A further and disastrous development of modern fiction presents itself

in the problem novel, a class of work of recent origin which exercises a specially baneful influence. Amongst the questions which modern learning, scientific discovery, and the conditions of our complicated social organization have opened, there are many which demand scrupulously accurate statement, special knowledge, severe self-restraint, and delicate handling. To fail in any of these qualities is to render their discussion at once worthless and injurious; to be absolutely silent about some of them, in works of imagination, whose end is joy and beauty, is the only seemly choice. Yet it is just those problems which are best left shrouded under cover of work designed for serious and professional study that are now dragged into the full light of discussion *coram populo*. The enigmas and perplexities of life, the relations between the sexes, the difficulties suggested by the modern doctrine of heredity, the religious misgivings of a highly critical age, are all dissected with unblushing audacity and dogmatic self-assurance. The assumption of infallibility by the modern novelist is consummate, and would be supremely ridiculous if it were not lamentably mischievous. The writer of the religious novel of our day calmly sets to work to destroy the Catholic faith which has withstood the assaults of nineteen centuries, and presents to his readers in its stead a brand-new creed of his own creation. As we read the airy self-conceits with which modern writers of fiction resolve all problems after their own fashion, we are continually protesting, "None of us is infallible, not even the youngest of us." We must be pardoned for adding that the gentler sex are the most audacious of the offenders. Women rush in where angels fear to tread.

The popularity of these stories, saturated with sham philosophy and pre-

tentious irreligiosity, may be traced to the same cause which has led to the deterioration of the romance pure and simple. Just as the new half-educated public only appreciates stories of modern life which are written from its own standpoint of social sympathy, but devours these with avidity to gain acquaintance with life beyond its own narrow circle, so also it is only interested in the discussion of man's relation to God, to his fellow-men, and to his own desires when they are debated on the level of its own intellectual platform, and therefore it betakes itself eagerly to problem novels of its own mental standard in the hope of learning through them the trend of popular philosophy and the opinions on social and religious questions which, as we say, are in the air. It is a consequence of the influence of this heterogeneous middle class (as the *Colloquies of Criticism* reminds us) that modern literature loses one of its chief charms, viz. that grace, dignity, "polish and reticence which it was formerly obliged to cultivate." An uncritical public accepts without misgiving the dogmatism of its self-appointed guides, is not shocked by rapid transitions from the temple to the music-hall, and adopts its philosophy of life from the principles inculcated in its problem novels.

Now, to "be free to understand and to enjoy" (it has been said) "is the claim of the modern spirit," and this claim is asserted in the modern novel in terms of the most startling distinctness. Freedom is claimed from all the restraints which religion would put upon it—first by undermining the authority of Christianity, and sweeping the supernatural aside as incredible and impossible in the light of modern scientific teaching, and then by representing man as the slave of blind law, which so works as to bind him in the indissoluble fetters of ne-

cessity. Thus we are free from moral restraint through the negation of our free-will and the contemptuous rejection of "the perfect law of liberty." The claim to understand is extended to all life's mysteries and all Nature's secrets, and no restraint is placed on the open photography of passion. It is as though science had invaded the realm of sentiment, and subjected emotion and motive to the action of the resolvent and the scalpel. It is a delusion to suppose that in any circumstances ignorance is bliss, and the prurient curiosity of the fleshly mind is only a legitimate thirst which should always be indulged and satisfied. Nor is it an unworthy climax to this popular philosophy that enjoyment is the chief end and purpose of life—refined enjoyment for some, under a coarser disguise for others. In this present miserable world let those who will indulge in dreams of immortal felicity. We may perhaps admire their self-denying efforts to reach it, or we may pity their blindness in still believing in it; but for ourselves all these bright hopes have vanished like morning clouds before the rising sun. The practical result is seen in the stories which portray characters that are utterly invertebrate. Strength of will is dissolved in hysterical emotion. Self-abandonment is at once man's fate and his highest wisdom. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

There is, we repeat, a very large class of readers whose literary education at the most momentous period of their lives is entirely derived from novels, and this fact increases the responsibility of novelists to an incalculable degree. Yet this responsibility is rarely felt and acted upon even in quarters in which we might have looked for better things. Only recently we met with a story translated from the Russian by a Fel-



low of an Oxford College, and introduced by a laudatory preface which dwelt upon the merits of the writer and his work. The distinguishing features of the book were a realism which did not shrink from the portrayal of details neither necessary for the plot nor artistically suitable, and a ludicrous inaccuracy in describing historic persons and events. Yet the uneducated reader would naturally regard a volume issued under such auspices as a trustworthy record, nor, we are afraid, would this confidence be shaken on reading in the introductory pages that the author held both the Hedonist and the Christian creeds. We wonder how many who read this glaring absurdity were revolted at its transparent self-contradictiveness. What a marvellous solution of the problem how to make the best of both worlds! The same man at once a Stoic and an Epicurean, a Nominalist and a Realist, a believer in materialism and in transcendentalism, a follower of the gospel of self-indulgence and that of self-denial! What a priceless guide for pleasure-hunting, worldly-minded Christians! Yet such an instance is far from exceptional. Books circulated by tens of thousands inculcate as low-toned a morality and cast a scorn no less ignorant and baseless upon Christian truth.

It is mournful to reflect in this connection what serious moral mischief has been wrought by many female novelists. Women are in many respects exceptionally gifted for novel-writing. Their powers of rapid intuition, their penetrating insight into character, their skill in delicate analysis of motive, their innate recognition of the finer and more subtle shades of feeling, their capacity for sympathy and tenderness, even the superior sensitiveness and suspicion which are part of their peculiar armor in the battle of life, and more than all their imagina-

tive powers—in many cases so ethereal, fertile, and refined—all mark out the gentler sex as likely to be pre-eminent successful in this domain of literature. The very limitations which perhaps have excluded them from the lofty heights of tragedy are advantageous in the cultivation of the lower, yet fascinating, valleys of romance. No wonder that a whole army of authoresses marches in daily increasing numbers to seize upon a territory to which they possess so rightful a claim. Time was when to the exercise of the gifts and graces already mentioned, there was due, at least to the majority of English female novelists, the yet higher praise of having raised the prevailing tone of fiction by works which "did not contain a single line inconsistent with rigid morality or even with virgin delicacy." So Macaulay bore testimony to Madame D'Arblay and the accomplished women writers of sixty years ago. Could the same unqualified homage be truthfully paid to the entire work of English women now?

The answer must be an emphatic and sorrowful negative. The deterioration from the lofty tone which commanded Macaulay's admiration has gradually deepened since his day until some female novelists stand in the foremost rank of offenders against decency and purity of thought. So rapid has been the decline that authoresses only recently notorious for what are now termed *risky* stories—the epithet is one of those newly-coined euphemisms with which our age palliates well-earned and stern reprobation—are already distanced, and their books, once in wide demand, are no longer asked for, because they do not satisfy the jaded appetite for more highly-seasoned dishes. A cultivated taste for the abnormal on the part of reader and writer alike is apt to sicken at ordinary fare, and at the present rate of

downward progress it is hard to say to what depth of license the modern novelist will descend.

We ask those who may be tempted to consider our criticism exaggerated, and who have such acquaintance with the modern novel as entitles them to give a valid judgment, to recall the character of some of the most widely circulated works of fiction during the last few years. We purposely abstain from mentioning names. In one prominent instance it is only too easy to trace a gradual but continuous moral descent in the works of a writer once of the highest promise, due to the selection of abnormal topics for minute and curious handling. When a writer of fiction has once decided that sinners are more interesting than saints, and that sin in some of its most repulsive forms is suitable matter for artistic treatment, the door is already open for almost endless mischief. The more minutely observant such a writer is, and the more vividly she conceives the image she pictures in her story, the greater the danger will be of her dilating on details which refinement and delicacy peremptorily reject. It is only through the injurious influence exerted by the selection of types of character and circumstance in themselves exceptional, repulsive, and bizarre that we can account for the mournful issue of a book of which a friendly critic writes, "there are pages in it which, if read at all, can only be read through the eyelashes. They hurt like the sudden view of a street accident; they are as intolerable as the sight of a surgical operation." And this is the quality of a romance which probably commanded the widest circulation, and secured the largest class of educated readers in the first year of the twentieth century of the Christian era.

A variety of causes has combined to effect this deplorable change in the

character of the work of female novelists and in the too general tolerance of stories that should be universally and indignantly tabooed. Foremost amongst them is the modern scientific spirit, with its tendency to microscopic analysis and minute dissection, which begets a certain morbid taste for the investigation of the workings of passion, and so ventures upon hazardous ground that can only be trodden with cautious steps. In the next place there has been the terrible and baneful influence of the school of animalism under the guidance of such leaders as Ibsen and Zola. When the veil is torn away which the modesty of our predecessors drew over the secrets of Nature and the sores of sickness it is only the eyes of angels that can look on without contracting moral taint. A third and potent element is what we may term the recent literary enfranchisement of women, which has led to their intrusion into that purely modern domain of fiction—the problem novel. The subjects selected by some authors of this school recall Browning's stinging lines:

Then, there's the other picker-out of  
pearls  
From dung-heaps—ay, your literary  
man  
Who draws on his kid gloves to deal  
with Sludge  
Daintily and discreetly—shakes a dust  
O' the doctrine, flavors thence, he well  
knows how  
The narrative or the novel—half be-  
lieves  
All for the book's sake, and the public  
stare,  
And the cash that's God's sole solid in  
this world.

Yet while these causes in some degree explain, they can in no degree extenuate, the choice of questionable themes by women. Out of the infinite mass of materials at hand it is only a diseased imagination that will pick the anomalous and the abnormal. If, as

Schiller insists, the end of all art, even that of the most poignant tragedy, is joy, the work of many contemporary writers is as gross a violation of the rules of art as it is of the canons of refinement, decency, and high moral feeling.

Nor is it to be thought that the injury done by objectionable novels affects only a select class of society, and that their discussion of religious or recondite questions influences or amuses only the inner circle of the initiated. The mischief penetrates into the most unsuspected quarters, creeps through the fences with which love tries to hedge round the young, promotes a taste which rapidly calls for further stimulant. Young girls devour books tending to shake their Christian faith and to sully their moral purity. Not long since *Robert Elsmere* was the book chiefly in request in one of the greatest English centres of female education. It is the testimony of a librarian of forty years' standing in a town largely inhabited and resorted to by the cream of the upper English middle class that there has been for some years past a continuous decline in the moral character of the novels most largely in demand. Stories which a generation ago were looked at askance as being risky and questionable are now entirely neglected in favor of more outspoken impropriety. So widespread is the mischief that objectionable tales even find entrance into school libraries, and schoolmasters have felt constrained to issue a public protest against the stamp of books they find placed in the hands of mere boys. It is hard to say whether the life represented in many cases with its minute and repulsive realism is more injurious to the untrained reader than the false sentimentalism and sham religiousness with which this class of fiction is commonly interlarded. External reality and internal

falsity—both equally detestable—make up work which is not infrequently diabolically clever. "I tell you all this because I don't believe it" is the hypocritical apology of the scandal-monger. "I describe the prurient details of a sinful career that you may see how wrong it is, and learn to avoid it," is the half-suggested apology of the modern writer. And when elaborate discussion of such questions as had certainly much better not be spoken of are intermingled with pretentious disquisitions on Wagner and Beethoven and Bach, so that the coarse topics seem as fitting for ordinary treatment as the refined ones, it is too late to enter upon the less attractive scenes of sorrow and remorse. The mischief has been already done. The glamour of substantial prosperity in the earlier chapters, where escape from the worrying discontent of a mean and narrow life is found through yielding to temptation, and where all that the young prize highly—wealth, fame, social distinction—are lavished upon the unrepentant Magdalen—has worked its baneful influence, which the closing scenes too often fail altogether to counter-balance. A taint and stain have been burnt into the mind, in the perusal of the heroine's temptations and falls, which her subsequent repentance fails to obliterate.

There is another class of modern novels, against which we would utter our most emphatic protest, in which the most sacred subjects and scenes are introduced merely to produce startling effects, and the arcana of the Holy of Holies are opened to the vulgar gaze as a sensational *mise-en-scène*. Instances of such prostitution of religious things will occur to all who have a wide acquaintance with the modern novel, and are too notorious to need any protracted illustration. In a widely circulated Hungarian novel, which in the English translation was

allowed admittance to English drawing-rooms, to the unbounded astonishment of our French neighbors, scenes of Christian worship are presented in the closest proximity with a picture of the Court of Nero, described with a fidelity of detail quite unnecessary. The natural repulsiveness of the animalism and realism in which some modern novelists indulge is rendered a hundredfold more hideous when thus brought into juxtaposition with what commands our deepest reverence and adoring admiration. In another story a mother's love in all its ineffable purity and tenderness is painted in the most delicate tints, which are thrown into high relief by dark shadows of the seductive lasciviousness of an accomplished courtesan. In a third the sudarium of a public bath in a Roman provincial town is realistically described just as the reader is fresh from learning how the power of child-like faith triumphantly sustains a young girl under the manifold temptations of a heathen home. Such perversion of things sacred to sordid purposes is unutterably shocking, yet it apparently passes without rebuke, or is justified on the plea that such things exist. Of course they do, and so do boudoirs and pigsties; but we do not place them side by side, so as to step directly from one to the other.

The native stream of impure literature, in itself of sufficient and unsavory volume, is perpetually swollen by the importation and translation of foreign books. It is difficult to understand on what principle the selection of foreign novels for reproduction here is made, unless it be a willingness to pander to the most diseased palates. In many instances the most objectionable in subject and treatment of a foreigner's books is chosen for presentation in an English dress. We could name French artists who are finished stylists, and some of whose works are

quite unexceptionable; but these are passed over in favor of tales which have with difficulty obtained the license for circulation in their own country. In such cases all the elegances of style—their sole redeeming feature—are lost in the process of translation; the grossness alone remains.

A further disfigurement of the modern novel is the gratuitous and offensive profanity in which many popular writers indulge. Quite recently the *Times* justly complained of the prevalent habit of using words from Holy Scripture as titles to works of fiction, but even this is a venial fault in comparison with the unblushing irreverence of a large class, including many female novelists.

We have before us the cheap edition of two stories by a lady who writes under a well-known *nom de plume*, and whose works are welcomed with a chorus of almost unqualified praise. The hero of the first describes to his friend the place where he is staying—"a village with a church, a public-house, and a Dissenting chapel—one evil brings another; and the rustic maid abounds, a creature of large feet, wide smiles, and limited innocence." He asks his landlady, whose industry excites his scorn, "If she did not think that the five wise may have lived to envy the five foolish virgins. She looked at me—as only a woman can look—and mournfully winked." The kitchen garden is depicted as "a modern Eden with a dash of the commonplace, and a clothes-line extended from the Tree of Knowledge to the Tree of Life." And an invitation to dinner calls forth the ejaculation, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is quite consistent with such a spirit of irreverence—for these examples of it we sincerely apologize to our readers—that a young Oxford man, well born and of some high instincts, should in-

terlard his proposal to a very beautiful girl with plenty of oaths, and that marriage should be represented as almost invariably a mistake, and its victims as waking too late from their delusion and chafing helplessly against their chains. The companion story—a rapid and clever sketch of a house party in the country, composed mainly of disagreeable and vacillating people who change their minds and loves with the most singular facility—is sandwiched between a prologue whose purpose is apparently to hold religion up to odium, and a brief lyric epilogue full of religious sentiment, neither prologue nor epilogue having any bearing on the story. The action (as we are told on the title-page) takes place in the course of twenty-four hours, and the authoress deems it appropriate to add to this announcement, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We shrink from all conjecture of the purpose designed in this strange juxtaposition. It is typical of a tone and spirit which mistake flippant irreverence in quotation for wit, and which outrage the Christian sentiment, "My heart standeth in awe of Thy Word."

What shall we say of the ordinary type of religious novel in its too common perversion to become the vehicle of misrepresentation, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness? How commonplace and faded are its leading types—the High, the Low, the Broad Church, the Romanist, the Dissenting, the sceptical! We are weary of the lay figures dressed up in a conventional costume—the Jesuit in disguise, the milksop of a curate, the Dissenting preacher with a soul above his sordid surroundings, the odious Anglican painted by Romanists as a pendant to equally detestable and unvarnished portraiture of the Popish priest as conceived by ultra-Protestant authors.

It is almost inconceivable that anyone should all unconsciously "give himself away," as do many novelists of this class of fiction. With what sublime innocence they write themselves down as transparently spiteful, hopelessly ignorant, and inveterately vulgar! Yet their caricatures are unquestionably accepted by scores of readers as truthful portraits, and they are not seldom commended in quarters where we might expect to find sounder judgment and more trustworthy guidance. It is not long since a leading Church newspaper spoke in terms of almost unqualified praise of a story which grossly misrepresented the English Church and clergy. It indeed put one saving clause in its elaborate eulogy, but so faint and brief as only to heighten its approval. The mischief wrought by the ignorant misstatements of religious novels is incalculable. The reaction consequent upon the exposure of their misrepresentations is at the root of many a perversion to infidelity or to Rome.

It is the bane of controversial novels, and takes away all real merit, alike as contributions to thought or as artistic works, that the side to which victory shall incline is already so predetermined in the writer's mind that the whole story is written with the purpose of reaching a foregone conclusion. In unscrupulous hands this necessity begets an untruthful delineation of incidents and character, both of which are distorted to suit the purpose in view. It may, indeed, be said, only too truly, that all controversy is liable to one-sided and partisan presentation; but the peculiar danger of controversy in fiction arises from the difficulty of detecting and exposing falsehood disguised in the garb of a story. The reader, in most cases unskilled in legitimate methods of discussion, is first beguiled and thrown off his guard by the interest of the



narrative, then his sympathy is secured, and finally, it may be, his convictions gained on behalf of that which he would have rejected if presented in a less alluring and deceptive shape. When to the art thus employed there is added the seductiveness of novelty, the crafty innuendo against religious belief and the widespread delusion that to call in question the faith "once for all delivered" is the mark of a superior and emancipated mind—these causes in combination may work with deadly effect upon those who are as lamentably ignorant of definite dogmatic Christianity as are but too many who pass through our secondary and higher-class schools. Can we wonder at the mischief, the unsettlement and practical infidelity which a pernicious section of novels works among this half-educated mass—mischief not so much of avowed unbelief as of the laxity which is bred by the dissemination of half-uttered doubt? As long as a man has a religious difficulty he has an excuse whose practical fruit may be seen in the growing neglect of public worship, in disregard of the sanctity of Sunday, and in the adoption of every form of self-indulgence, which are assuming the dimensions of a national disaster.

Yet how valuable this branch of romance may be, if treated with knowledge, dignity, and reserve, has been shown in a thousand instances—from the *Pilgrim's Progress* to *John Inglesant*. We select the latter as an almost perfect example of religious fiction. The careful statement of facts, the just appreciation of the adversary's standpoint, the recognition of what is truly admirable in the varied systems of life and thought portrayed, are worthy of the importance of the issues at stake; and then it is so heightened withal in its quiet assumption of the supreme value of personal re-

ligion, and of the loss that inevitably follows on the neglect of it. There is no word of preaching at the reader; but how its lessons all come home! There is none of the sophistry so common in controversy to compass a passing and illegitimate triumph. As the reader is carried along the narrative of incident and the development of character, he is ever conscious of the intimate connection between the present world and that which lies beyond it, and is made to realize things unseen.

Shall we attempt to delineate what manner of work in the realm of fiction would be adequate to its enormous responsibilities, and make it the power for good which it might be and ought to be in our great Christian commonwealth?

The writer of romance cannot put into his work more than he has in himself, and his art must and will be the expression of his own inmost soul. He must then—to fulfil his high function aright—set out with the hypothesis of a Divine Idea of the world, of a purpose of God in the creation of the universe, manifested indeed under serious limitations, and often seen only through a glass darkly, but revealed with increasing clearness to those who seek for it through long and laborious travail. By faith such a man understands that the things which are seen were not made by things which do appear; "conscious that God has a purpose in his life, and in remembrance of his home in Him, he travels through this mortal life as the citizen of a better land, and looks on Nature with other than human eyes." If the artist has in this way found entrance into the inner shrine of the counsels of God, he no longer views objects "in isolation dead and spiritless," or separates the different branches of study from their common origin and end, but he sees the end in the means, the uni-

versal in the particular; he has a light from heaven to shed upon the meanest concerns of life. Such a light is, of course, not that of the common day, but it is the ordinary mistake to suppose that it shines—if it ever shines at all—unsought and unsolicited in the souls of an elect few; whereas it is won by painful meditation, by study of the inner secret of a lost but redeemed world, and by subordination of the intellectual to the moral understanding of the riddle of the universe. An author so inwardly equipped, fairly abreast of the intellectual culture of his time, and in full sympathy with its highest aspirations and its keenest sorrows, will be likely to produce work that shall be worthy of his high calling as a teacher, and in any walk of literature, in this twentieth century of the Christian era.

Judged by such an ideal standard, what can be said of the great body of modern fiction? We pass over, as altogether outside the reckoning, the great mass of books which fall from the press still-born, the works of authors absolutely incompetent and futile, the abortive productions of foolish people who, in their ambition to see their names in print, are willing to pay themselves for the issue of work which does not return half the cost of paper and print. If we are rightly informed, the quantity of such worthless waste each year is considerable. But of those which secure, and to some degree deserve, a better reception—or, to speak plainly, of the average mass of successful contemporary fiction, what proportion corresponds even remotely to the true conception of high-toned art? There is a plethora of ability, industry, and smartness in the modern novel. There is often sparkling brilliancy in dialogue, marvellous poetic feeling in describing natural scenery, skilful development of striking situations. In-

genuity of plot, fertility of invention, keen analysis of character, rapid and dexterous development of incident—all qualities of high excellence—characterize many contemporary novels. Yet in many even of the best there is the defect, which is felt even when not expressed, of any power

to descry

The mystic heaven and earth within,  
Plain as the sea and sky.

For lack of this insight a large proportion of novelists, who excel chiefly in the development of character, depict a world absolutely without hope. They describe the butterflies of society as polished and kindly, yet frivolous, heartless, soulless, with no sense of anything better than the fleeting present, and no thought of the beyond. The more thoughtful characters in their pages are baffled by the perplexities of existence as they ponder the contradictions their own nature reveals to them. Take, for example, the most touching, thrilling picture drawn for us in *Audrey*—that masterpiece of truthful delineation, of poetic description of scenery, of firm portraiture of character. How singularly sweet and pure is the conception of the heroine—a simple child of Nature, tender, trustful, and true—timid, yet capable of patient endurance of suffering—in early womanhood a dreamer of dreams, from which she wakes to the consciousness of life's intolerable reality! How vivid is the presentation of Marmaduke Haward, with his fine instincts and his complex passions and his irresolution—despite his masterfulness—which breeds so much disaster, and his noble generosity to his bondsman, Angus Maclean! The gradual development of the story is singularly truthful and convincing. The difficulties inherent in the portrayal of a highly mixed and intricate nature are triumphantly grap-

pled with; the subordinate persons very vividly and deftly sketched in. Life in Virginia at the opening of the eighteenth century stands out in stereoscopic relief. The book is full of beauty and of a fascination which is all the writer's own, and it well deserves the praises so bountifully accorded it. Yet how terribly unsatisfying it is! How absolutely without suggestion or hint that the riddle of the universe which it propounds so skilfully has its solution! When all the characters are exquisitely mellowed through the softening fires of suffering and love, when Audrey and Haward are on the very threshold of happiness, so painfully won, the cup of joy is dashed to atoms just as they are about to quaff it. If Miss Johnson's purpose were to repeat the well-worn theme, "vanity of vanities," it has been accomplished; but with all its genius and beauty *Audrey* carries us no further. In thus marking the limitations of her romance we are bringing no complaint against the gifted authoress. It is well to point so beautifully the truth, "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all;" yet, when she was so close on the border-land, we cannot but regret that no hint is given us of the Delectable Mountains and the Celestial City—that no suggestion is made of a reality which would more than satisfy Audrey's brightest dreams.

The popularity of objectionable works of fiction is at once the more deplorable and the less excusable in face of the wealth of admirable and irreproachable romance which is constantly pouring from the press. To speak only of names which immediately occur to us, what delightful hours may be spent over the pages of R. L. Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling, of Stanley Weyman and Max Pemberton and Merriman, of Owen

Meredith and Guy Boothby and Henry James and Anthony Hope, of Conan Doyle and Rider Haggard, of Cutcliffe Hyne and Frankfort Moore. With what dexterity has the genius of Mr. H. G. Wells adapted the marvels of scientific discovery and speculation to the service of romance, and created a new department of imaginative literature! And these are but a fraction of the numbers which swell the great army of novelists. Take some of their latest issues, such as *Count Hannibal*, or *The Velvet Glove*, or *Lisbeth*, or *The Lady Paramount*, or *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The first three are striking indications that the practiced hand of their authors has lost nothing of its cunning; the last two, though but slighter examples of the writer's skill, yet carrying the reader on unweariedly to the close. *The Lady Paramount* is a wonderful illustration of how much Mr. Henry Harland can make out of trifles light as air. There are only three persons in the story besides the hero and heroine, and all five of them—Anthony and Susanna, the grim old Commendatore Fregi, the old maiden lady Miss Sanders, and Adrian, the irrepressible, all of them are lovable. With its airy grace, and its really wonderful descriptions of scenery, and its "charm of earliest birds," and its facilities of a whimsical and pleasant talk, *The Lady Paramount* is like a graceful picture painted in tints of ethereal delicacy, which is yet not deficient in distinctness and firmness of touch.

Those who are curious to see a successful novelist at work will be gratified with Sir T. Wemyss Reid's biography of William Black. The book is written with all the enthusiasm of close and highly cherished intimacy, and presents an alluring picture. It repeats the old story of early struggles and chilling failures, and final success was—as success is alone worth win-

ning—step by step, through steadfastness of purpose, persistent high resolve, and unwearied toil. The countless readers of Black's charming stories may learn here at what cost of mental parturition the delightful creations of his fancy were brought to light. *Si vis me flere, fles ipse*, and Black's men and women were intensely real to himself before he introduced them, all instinct with life, to the world. He owed his wonderful descriptions of scenery to such scrupulous fidelity to truth that he paid a visit to the Isle of Mull amidst deep snow in order to paint its winter garb in *Macleod of Dare*. And the man himself was no less fascinating than his romances, if Sir Wemyss Reid's account of him is accurate, at the rare moments

when the veil of reticence in which he was so commonly shrouded was rent, and he bared his heart to his friends. Under no other conditions could one so fully realize all that he was—the poet, the thinker, the artist, the man of lofty ideals, the eager and untiring student of life, with its manifold, unspeakable mysteries, its awful tragedies, and its glorious possibilities . . . No jarring note was ever struck in those long talks; no ungenerous word fell from his lips, no mean or sordid thought. And yet his mood would change with startling suddenness, passing from grave to gay, from deep speculations on those questions upon which human hopes and happiness depend to the lightest and the brightest of the topics which attracted him, the beauties of some spot seen once far away, or the glorious uncertainties of salmon-fishing on the Oykel, or the delights of yachting in the Western seas (p. 221).

Doubtless Black had his limitations and his defects, some of them due to reaction against the stern Calvinistic creed in which he had been reared in early childhood. Yet, broadly speaking, his books are not unworthy of a man whom his biographer, with possibly pardonable exaggeration, calls

"one of the purest, manliest, most chivalrous souls the world has ever known."

A noteworthy, and we may add a satisfactory, element in the history of the modern novel is the immense popularity of what is called the Kallyard School. These stories have been circulated by hundreds of thousands, and the astounding success of the earlier and abler writers—Ian Maclaren and J. M. Barrie—has naturally produced a host of imitators, some of whom are not unworthy of their prototypes. The author of the *Colloquies of Criticism* suggests an elaborate explanation of their extraordinary attractiveness:

"Every novel," he says, "in which the narrative is written in the language of the highly educated, while the characters speak in some different and provincial dialect, implies that the readers to whom it is addressed are persons in a position superior to that which the characters occupy, and invites them to judge the characters by a set of standards different from, and in a certain sense superior to, the standards of the characters themselves" (p. 37).

To the subtle flattery thus adroitly and imperceptibly administered, and to the introduction of their readers to that Scottish mode of life and thought which to most of them is a new world, the writer insists that the signal appreciation of these books may be ascribed. We hold that this criticism—acute as it appears—is utterly inadequate, and that it entirely fails to apprehend the true reason why a series of tales of cottage life, with no plot and no catastrophe, with little external picturesqueness, dealing with that commonplace peasant life which is devoid of incident and narrow in range—why such stories should have been able to command universal popularity. The *Colloquies of Criticism* does less than justice to the broad human sympathies which fill the hearts of the thousands of dwellers in mod-

ern suburban villas, and to the unfailing and irresistible interest which real practical godliness, when deftly portrayed, awakens in every human breast. It is in the eye to see and the graphic pen to describe, in the genuine pathos salted with native and unexaggerated humor, in the singularly delicate touch of Nature that makes the whole world kin—it is in these that the true secret of the triumph of the Kailyard School is to be found.

Take, for example, the two works, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* and *A Window in Thrums*, which we regard as the masterpieces of the school. There is not a single superfluous page, there is not a line of padding, but a series of cabinet pictures, each in itself so perfect a gem that we know not to which to give the preference as we pass them in review, alternately grave and gay. The whole of "Domsie" and "The Doctor of the Old School" in the one book, and "Preparing to receive Company" and "The Last Night" in the other, are perhaps the most conspicuous instances of the literary skill combined with tenderness of feeling which pervades them. And the leading characters—Margaret Hoo, Dr. MacLure, Mrs. Macfayden (the sermon-taster), Drumsheugh, Hendrie, Leebie, Jess, and, last and best, James Soutar, the inimitable—what distinct creations they are! What a gallery of vivid, breathing portraiture! What an addition to the types we cherish in mind and memory! What depths of spiritual thought, what heights of spiritual aspiration, what vigor of practical spiritual life is revealed in the story of these outwardly grim and unattractive country folk! Yet all wear the unmistakable stamp of reality and paint with truthful touches the mellowing of character under the influence of simple and self-denying piety. The Christian thought and life here described have doubtless their marked

limitations, but as we read our heart is stirred with a godly jealousy of the religious training which can work so effectually on toiling rustics and homely weavers north of the Tweed.

Such books may exert a far more beneficial influence than that which is exercised by novels written with an avowedly religious purpose—a class of fiction of great importance at the present day. Incredible as it seems, there is a multitude of readers who are ready to accept almost any new-fangled creed presented to them in a work of fiction. It is easy to pour cheap sarcasm upon people who in their want of religious guidance think they can find it ready and complete in boards for six shillings, but the root of such delusion lies in the failure of the Church to inoculate the great mass of the English middle-class with a real knowledge of Christianity. Here is the explanation offered by a competent critic of the popularity of religious fiction:

"The readers of religious novels," she writes, "are ever on the watch for new faiths. Oppressed with a thousand sorrows as old as Time, they still press forward with unceasing optimism to try new recipes for joy. I think that we have here the real reason for the popularity of religious fiction; it is one more cure for the ills of a world that has 'alied from the first.' Not an abstract love of truth, not even a deep interest in theology, is at the root of the demand for religious fiction; but the intensely personal question, 'Will this help to make me happier?'"<sup>1</sup>

—a question, we may add, which presses on many minds in a day when men are intensely restless and unsettled, and, although better off in material enjoyment, are not so happy as their fathers.

What the ultimate result will be, if

<sup>1</sup> Miss J. Findlater in the "National Review," March, 1902.

(The Living Age, April 19, 1902.)



the popularity of injurious fiction and its continuous supply remain unchecked, is a question of grave importance. There are not wanting signs which indicate that the deterioration of the national tone in religion and morals is extending, and those who have the welfare of the fatherland at heart should speak out with no uncertain voice. The sister art to fiction exhibits like unmistakable marks of degradation, and there are plays presented in London theatres the popularity of which, without having an unnatural moral standard, we cannot but deplore. But the evil influence of objectionable plays is not a tithe in amount of that exerted by pernicious novels. If Christian fathers and mothers were more mindful of their duty, and insisted on the exclusion of questionable novels from their houses, an improvement might be effected; but we tremble to think of the conditions under which another genera-

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tion will be brought up by mothers whose minds have been nurtured upon the garbage now so plentifully administered. If the pulpit were more plentifully used for its fitting purpose of warning against a real and pressing evil, not by sweeping generalizations, as was too much the habit among the earlier Evangelicals, who denounced all novels indiscriminately, but by judicious and sympathetic teaching, and by outspoken condemnation of the growing laxity of morals, the public conscience might be awakened to the urgency of the peril. And, perhaps more than all, if those in high places would set the example of discountenancing not only pernicious literature, but its authors, a higher tone of feeling would gradually obtain. The responsibility of those in position is greater than they realize, and the patronage extended to what seems only doubtful may have far-reaching and disastrous consequences.

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### AMURATH TO AMURATH.

Had Lord Salisbury been succeeded by Mr. Chamberlain it would have been as truly as it is commonly said that his resignation of the Premiership had marked as definitely as any event in political annals the point of transition between two eras. No men could be more incompatible by tradition and nature than those who for the last seventeen years have been the two principal members of the same party. They have been genuinely agreed for all immediate purposes upon the main questions before the country in that period. But there has existed between them a deeper difference than that of opinion. They have been antagonistic in temperament. Opponents of mutually sym-

pathetic character will fraternize in spite of dissimilar views. Few things are more frequent in politics than for colleagues of like views but opposite feelings to hate each other. They hold the same convictions but not in the same temper, and while the influence of their formal agreement is occasional, the irritation created by instincts antithetical in every spontaneous thought and word is constant. Lord Salisbury and his Colonial Secretary have been the most remarkable examples since Lord Palmerston and Mr Gladstone, or at least since the case of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby, of this natural incompatibility of colleagues. All the private correspondence of

Cabinet Ministers that is given to the world from time to time proves the extent of mental reservation which may possess members of the same Administration even amidst their apparently most harmonious transactions.

It is hard not to think that in the case of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain we had two men who must have been acutely conscious at intervals of the fundamental lack of mutual admiration between them. In class, character, in personal gifts and political methods, above all, perhaps, in their periods, they differ as completely as any statesmen who have ever succeeded in working together with memorable consequence through some sixteen years of public life. In mere years, indeed, there is marvellously little difference between these types. Lord Salisbury had been surrounded for a decade by the peculiar prestige of aged authority. He was the Nestor of European politics. To look upon his bowed and massive head with its suggestion of "the mind forever voyaging through strange seas of thought alone," was to think with singular respect of Atlas weary of his burthen. Since the Chinese crisis, in which the signs of fatigue became unmistakable, he had been tacitly regarded by all the world as the tired Titan, and the last representative of another age. The Colonial Secretary, upon the other hand, has been accepted as the patentee of the new politics, and almost as the young man of the future. This antithesis is in universal usage, yet, in the chronological sense at least, it represents a curious and unique illusion. Lord Salisbury is very little over the Psalmist's span. Mr. Chamberlain is now very near it with his entrance the other day upon his sixty-seventh year. Yet the instinct which assumes a generation of difference in the feelings of these two men is not astray. The one is the dis-

appearing type of a great tradition. The other is the representative of the school of leadership which, in spite of every effort to retard its arrival, must become more and more frequent in the future. Lord Salisbury, in the political sense, is the Last of the Barons. Mr. Chamberlain is the first of the bourgeois. He is the Americanized man. What modern England needs is not now the restraining force which Lord Salisbury has exercised, but the positive driving-power which Mr. Chamberlain alone, of his party, possesses. Upon the frank acceptance of that distinction the fortunes of this country will largely depend. In the change of Premiers it has not been accepted.

The substitution which has occurred is conventionally plausible and radically false. Amurath to Amurath succeeds, and Cecil to Cecil. What the country at large desired was a total change from the Hatfield temper which, of vital value in its period, has been responsible to no inconsiderable degree for the increasing sense of national inertia during recent years. In the new Prime Minister, much more remarkable for dialectical skill than for creative ability, the analytical instinct and the negative tendency are continued. In the Colonial Secretary the affirmative instinct and the constructive aptitude are embodied. These are the progressive qualities. The country desires them and the country requires them. With the transfer of the Premiership to Mr. Balfour it cannot be truly said, as if Mr. Chamberlain had been called to the head of the Government it would have been, that we had passed from one political era to another. One era is indeed closed. The opening of another is deferred. Through no fault of the accomplished and attractive statesman who has given his name to a new administration, but through the circumstances inherent in a situation which repeats the disastrous error of

Lord Rosebery's first Cabinet, and keeps incomparably the most powerful member of the Ministry in a nominally subordinate position, Mr. Balfour's Premiership, by comparison with Mr. Chamberlain's, must be one of hesitation and compromise, probably destined to be of disappointing record and brief existence.

Lord Salisbury's contempt for popularity and display and the brilliant sobriety of his habit of mind, have blinded his contemporaries to the extraordinary paradox of his career. In the age of democracy he has been the most powerful, and for many purposes the most absolute noble, who ever controlled the State. The power of no man in Europe has been more independent of all influences from above or below. In the age of advertisement, again, he has been the most reticent and secluded statesman who has held office at any time. Although he was a Conservative by philosophy and descent, his Governments have been the medium of legislation more socialistic and advanced than the measures of any Liberal Ministry before him. His old invective was a branding iron. There can be no real doubt that if the domestic measures he has himself passed had been introduced by a Radical Cabinet, Lord Salisbury would have denounced them as communism and plunder. Since the formation of the Unionist Coalition the home policy of Lord Salisbury's Governments has been in general by no means the expression of Lord Salisbury's mind. In the domestic sphere it may be said of him that he has left not a single considerable trace of constructive capacity upon the social organization of the country which he has governed longer and more continuously than any man of great mental powers since Pitt. Upon the other hand, his preventive influence has been enormous, and whether as opposed to the hopeful advocates of the Newcastle Programme

or exercised as the head of a party expressly and successfully created for a great work of resistance, Lord Salisbury's unrivalled negative force was the chief secret of his strength. In foreign policy, upon the other hand, the case has been different.

It is questionable whether England, with the single exception of Chatham, has ever had a greater Foreign Minister. None of his predecessors commanded so much of the world's confidence and respect. In external affairs at least Lord Salisbury's work has been his own. He has been absolutely unfettered in that department by the conditions of the coalition. The concessions, indeed, which he was compelled to make in respect of social legislation secured him a more unquestioned discretion in his own sphere than any other Foreign Minister in this country has enjoyed. The admitted disadvantages of democracy for the purposes of foreign policy Lord Salisbury remedied by a very simple method. He treated democracy as though it did not exist. The consequence has been that the late Prime Minister, though making no abrupt outward change except in one striking instance in the traditions of our external policy, has gradually transformed them, and has brought matters to the point where a startling departure would be possible to any of his successors in several directions.

Lord Salisbury came to office when the prestige of this country had reached the depth of ignominy. He has quitted office leaving the repute of England abroad at a level never previously attained in our time. In the interval, he has conducted the State through a formidable succession of crises such as had beset no Premier for a century. The wisdom of his dealings with America has brought the two branches of the English-speaking stock from a condition of chronic liability to war to within sight of permanent peace if not

of eventual alliance. No man has done so much to remedy the disruption of the race, and no single work in foreign policy since the separation of America has signified for all essential purposes a more profoundly important and far-reaching achievement. In Europe Lord Salisbury's relations with all the members of the Triple Alliance have been marked by an intimate and consistent cordiality which, in its time, was one of the assets of European peace. History may judge that his dealings with Germany showed a greater lack of sagacity and foresight than any other aspect of his career as Foreign Minister. That is an issue which may be more critically examined upon another page. But at least it may be admitted that if Lord Salisbury committed an error in encouraging the development of a Power which it may yet need a European Coalition to arrest, German policy on its side did not succeed in the aims which the calculated cordiality of the Wilhelmstrasse might have induced a weaker minister to realize. Bismarck regarded a good understanding with this country as a means of embroiling us with France and Russia, though desiring to cultivate with both these Powers, for his own part, the best relations. There has been imminent peril at more than one period of the success of that policy. Lord Salisbury contrived to thwart it in the end with a sagacity which will always rank with the very highest of his achievements. The Iron Chancellor initiated the scramble for Africa. In the end the acquisitions of Germany in that continent have been utterly eclipsed by those of this country under Lord Salisbury. At the same time he has effected by the series of great settlements with the *Quai d'Orsay* in the same continent a work which ought to prove nothing less than the end of the antagonism of centuries between England and France. In spite of Fashoda, when the astute malice of the

mischief-makers of the Wilhelmstrasse seemed on the very point of gratification, the relations between the two Western Powers, Government and people alike, have never been more satisfactory than now.

Finally, if Lord Salisbury has not been destined to solve the master-problem of our foreign policy by arriving at a definite and peaceable agreement with Russia, he has created the preliminary conditions of that consummation. Nothing even in the paradoxes of the late Prime Minister's domestic measures was more startling than the revolutionary departure in foreign affairs which extinguished the Turkophile tradition of Tory policy. This was precisely one of the cases in which Lord Salisbury, alone among great English statesmen, was able to commit the country to the most serious engagements or to break its oldest connections at will without forfeiting the implicit confidence of the people in his moderation. He had the art of investing the immense audacity of his action in this as in other cases with a scrupulously matter-of-fact air. There is no more valuable gift in the methods of statesmanship. Thus, by his extrication of British policy from the historic entanglement in the Near East, Lord Salisbury laid the ground for that agreement with Russia which it remains for others to achieve. Add to this the almost final compromise of the age-old quarrel with France, and the *rapprochement* with America, and the enormous scope and significance of the late Premier's work in foreign policy will need no further emphasis.

Nor does this exhaust the catalogue of the achievements with which Lord Salisbury's name must be always identified. Entering office after the retrocession of the Transvaal and the abandonment of the Soudan, he has seen retrieved in the end both the characteristic disasters of an epoch of shame

and weakness. And there is one more fact still, and perhaps the most singular. Lord Salisbury's Government has been attacked in recent years, and to no slight extent with justice, in the name of efficiency. The reconstruction of the Navy, inaugurated under his second Ministry, has probably been beyond comparison the most extensive and successful enterprise in the direction of administrative efficiency that has yet been carried out in this country. There is no Imperial problem which Lord Salisbury has not either solved or brought nearer to solution, and it will be remembered of him, to sum up the impression of his career in a sentence, that he brought the great Victorian era to a close with fit dignity and good fortune.

Let us, however, consider the conditions under which Lord Salisbury's career rose to a height of continued reputation and power altogether beyond the promise of his early career. His case separates itself from that of all the great Prime Ministers before in one very marked respect. Beaconsfield and Gladstone, Canning and Peel, the two Pitts, Walpole, owed everything to the ascendancy of their own individual force. It cannot be pretended that this has been so in the instance of Lord Salisbury's career. Circumstances conspired to make that career possible. The late Premier's political position was rather created for him than achieved by him, and although he turned it to admirable purpose he never could have conquered it by his independent efforts or by the exertion of an inherent power of leadership. He owed far more to other men and to the chances of a general readjustment of party relations than did any previous statesman of his rank. His methods have been the antithesis of those which are supposed to appeal to the multitude. If Home Rule had never been adopted by Mr. Gladstone there can be

no question that Lord Salisbury never would have achieved by the intrinsic force of his individual qualities anything approaching the place which he has since been enabled to occupy in the State. The Liberal Unionist disruption led over to his camp an acquisition of strength which made the combined party overwhelming, while at the same time establishing an etiquette and a tacit compact which superseded the ordinary conditions of personal leadership. Those conditions have prevailed to the present day in sufficient validity to secure Mr. Balfour's succession as they secured Lord Salisbury's tenure, and to exclude Mr. Chamberlain from that highest place in the Government to which his services to his party have justly entitled him and to which, had he not thrown in his lot with the Unionist party, he would undoubtedly have attained.

For if we narrow down the analysis we must admit not only that without Mr. Chamberlain's support Mr. Balfour's Premiership would not be possible, but that without Mr. Chamberlain's support the authority and success even of Lord Salisbury's career for the last seventeen years would not have been possible. If the Colonial Secretary had not joined the movement the Liberal Unionist succession would have failed. With Mr. Chamberlain's assistance Mr. Gladstone's policy would have succeeded. With the transfer of less than twenty votes the Home Rule Bill of 1886 would have passed the House of Commons upon third reading, and the subsequent struggle with the House of Lords would have been infinitely more formidable than in 1893. Had the Duke of Devonshire and his school alone left the Liberal ranks their departure would have been represented as the flight of the Whigs and the purging of the party of the people from its anti-democratic elements. Mr. Chamberlain's action, even more distinctly



than Mr. Bright's, effaced party-lines, spread doubt, hesitation and pain through the Liberal ranks throughout the country, neutralized the spell of Mr. Gladstone's genius, and brought about the conditions which have since made the Liberal party for the first time in its history the party of an almost permanent minority. It was not Lord Salisbury who did most to deprive Mr. Gladstone of popular support. It was Mr. Chamberlain. It was not Lord Salisbury who sustained the brunt of debate against Mr. Gladstone's dialectical powers in the House of Commons. It was Mr. Chamberlain. Lord Salisbury was not the inventor of the great scheme which completed its triumph of the coalition by committing the Tory party to Radical legislation. The author was again Mr. Chamberlain. If, even in 1892, the Liberal party returned to office for three years in despite of all the efforts of the Unionist party, plus Mr. Chamberlain, who can doubt that with the latter upon their side the Radicals would have carried their policy. No; if it comes to narrowing down and seeking for the decisive factor amid what was no doubt a large number of contributory influences, Mr. Chamberlain must be accounted the personality above all others to which the Unionist coalition has owed its success, and to which Lord Salisbury's Governments have owed their existence.

The problem of South Africa succeeded that of Ireland. Few men can believe that under any other Minister than the present Colonial Secretary, the forces of Krugerism would ever have been effectually grappled with before they had developed a fatal power. Few men can believe that if it had not been for Mr. Chamberlain the war would have been conducted to a satisfactory peace. During the crisis after the early disasters of the war, Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour alike

showed an almost inexplicable loss of parliamentary faculty, and were strangely unable to find touch with popular sentiment. The absence of the instinct of national leadership in such a moment under institutions like ours, was the symptom of deficiencies in statesmen as serious as the want of ability to maintain discipline and confidence in the ranks is in a soldier. And these, let it be remembered, were the rare moments which search the quality of men. If Mr. Chamberlain had not risen to the height of his personality and of the occasion—had he failed to retain the full possession of his parliamentary powers when those of his late and of his present leader were temporarily in abeyance—the Unionist Government would have disappeared from office long before the close of the war.

But the whole argument can be packed in a nutshell. A Balfour administration without Mr. Chamberlain would, under present circumstances, be untenable. A Chamberlain administration without Mr. Balfour would be perfectly tenable. What has been true hitherto will still be so. Either the administration will exist by the Colonial Secretary's support, or it will not exist. Nothing could more effectually show how much more conventional public life has become since Vivian Grey was sent for; and how effectively Mr. Chamberlain has wrought, as has been shown, to build up the Hatfield dynasty into a more solid system of family government than was ever known, even in the typical age of government by the great families. Such a tenure of complete and uninterrupted power as Lord Salisbury has enjoyed for the greater part of seventeen years would have been unthinkable amid the fierce oligarchical competition of the eighteenth century. Such a transfer of the Premiership as has taken place at the end of

that tenure would have been not less unthinkable. And this singularly exclusive (unless we ought rather to say singularly inclusive) sway, wielded by a great noble of solitary habit from the House of Lords, has been exactly contemporary, as it happens, with the rise of democracy since 1885.

The old Adam of politics is, in short, inimitably conspicuous in this transaction. Toryism has abdicated its control of policy, but is determined to predominate in office; and those who pointed out that the Conservatives would not follow Mr. Chamberlain as a conclusive reason why the Colonial Secretary should not be Premier, declare with generous enthusiasm that the complete loyalty of Mr. Chamberlain may be depended upon to make Mr. Balfour's Premiership a success.

It is futile to deprecate these personal comparisons as they are deprecated by those who affect "the cant about decorum," which would make political discussion so painfully proper. Personal comparisons in these matters raise real issues. More. To those who believe that strong leadership is if anything more vital to the efficiency of a democratic system than to that of any other, these invidious distinctions raise supreme issues. It is, of course, obvious that even those who say that Mr. Balfour is not the fittest, do not necessarily say that he is not fit. His personal action during the crisis of the war, as the country now understands, was far more decisive and competent than anything in the tone of his embarrassed and ineffective speeches could have led public opinion to suspect. He is capable of displaying prompt and daring initiative by flashes. Already his management of the House of Commons has left a deeper mark upon domestic conditions than will permanently remain from Lord Salisbury's entire career. Mr. Balfour's reforms of procedure have

improved the actual machinery of government, and it is seldom that this particular form of praise can be given to any politician.

Nor is it beyond possibility that Mr. Balfour's tenure of the Premiership may be a brilliant surprise. He has, again, a great and novel opportunity. He responds readily to a fine stimulus. As in the case of the Irish Secretaryship, Mr. Balfour may develop an energy and alertness which he loses when reduced to routine. But the education question is as well calculated as any to bring out the natural workings of temperament and intelligence in a statesman, and upon this subject the new Prime Minister's record is not encouraging. Upon the policy of the new Government it would be idle at the present juncture to speculate. There is no reason to suppose that Mr. Balfour deliberately contemplates unexpected developments of any kind. That the country is full of a vague desire for a great change from the methods characteristic of the late and the present Premier alike is true. The country would be more than human and less than wise if it did not desire that change. But Mr. Balfour is Prime Minister precisely because it is desired that the minimum of change shall be made. If that idea is indeed to prevail, it will not take long to prove that the new Ministry is fundamentally out of harmony with the temper of the country. In domestic policy, however, the fate of the Education Bill has yet to be determined. The general attitude of the constituencies towards the new condition of things will be strongly influenced by the result of the autumn session.

Mr. Balfour's principal difficulty will probably lie in the region of foreign policy. Upon the occasions when he has taken charge of the Foreign Office in the absence of Lord Salisbury, he has shown by several signs that in for-

eign affairs he is likely to continue the weakest tradition of the late Prime Minister's statesmanship—its habitual favoritism towards Germany, as against the very markedly different demeanor adopted towards France and Russia. No man appreciates more than the new Prime Minister the nature of the familiar error which has dictated this attitude. In a speech a few years ago upon the statesmanship of Cromwell Mr. Balfour ingeniously depreciated the foreign policy of "our chief of men," by pointing out very pertinently, that under the influence of the outworn hostility against Spain, the Protector had encouraged the rise of the new power which was to prove our infinitely more dangerous and obstinate rival—France. The statesman who made that acute criticism cannot lack insight to apply it. With France and Russia our antagonisms are of secondary importance. The Republic has definitely adopted a defensive policy in naval affairs, and is no longer our serious competitor for sea power. Another great aggressive move by Russia is unlikely to be a source of peril in Mr. Balfour's time. Russia is no longer preoccupied in the first instance with English policy, but rather with the progress of Japan in the Far East, and of Germany in the Near East. Meanwhile, the Fatherland does not cease to push on the creation of its fleet, and becomes more distinctly every day our only conscious and dangerous competitor for sea-power. We have lately seen the old tactics in mischievous play. The official attacks upon Lord Pauncfote were as unmistakable as the fact that Count von Bülow upon the eve of his "biting the granite" speech had a long interview with the Kaiser. The tone of the Wilhelmstrasse towards this country is still such as no other Powers adopt towards us, and such as Germany adopts towards no other Power.

Nevertheless, the conviction of most persons who have given any degree of close study to the problem is that German diplomacy will probably succeed in its aim of hypnotizing British policy.

For dynastic reasons especially, as every well-informed observer of foreign relations is aware, it is a matter of almost insuperable difficulty for any Foreign Minister in this country, however complete may be his nominal freedom, to act towards Germany with quite the same independence as towards other Powers. Since the definite termination of the war, the Wilhelmstrasse, precisely as every tyro could and did predict, has commenced a determined effort to drug English opinion. Articles in praise of the British Navy, and demonstrating the impracticability of an invasion of these islands at least upon lines hitherto proposed, have begun to appear in the German naval magazines. Writers in the German reviews have begun to ridicule the vehement folly of the military experts, and others somewhat more excusable in their less instructed hatred, who reckoned upon the downfall of England as a result of the Boer war. All this would have had its value had anything of the kind appeared when it could have been of genuine service to this country. Organized with so much energy at the present juncture no manœuvres could be more conventionally crude. Yet such tactics have succeeded repeatedly, and the distinct probability is that they will succeed again. There are a thousand signs of the insidious pertinacity with which all the influence that the diplomacy of Berlin can manipulate is being brought to bear upon the task of inducing this country to exchange public embraces with Germany, partly as a means of confusing our own policy with regard to that country itself, partly as a means

of reawakening the jealousy and suspicion of France and Russia, and of marring all serious attempts to improve our relations with the Dual Alliance.

Now that the South African war has ended, and German attentions have again become pressing, we shall probably not have long to wait for some definite indication of the degree of coolness and dexterity which Mr. Balfour's Government is likely to display in dealing with the most trying and momentous of all the problems of British policy. That Mr. Balfour is considerably more likely to succumb than to resist most people would be inclined to predict. We shall see.

Public interest in the meantime will be mainly concerned with the question of immediate and eventual changes in the composition of the Ministry. Whether Sir Michael Hicks-Beach persists in his wish to retire or is induced to remain, can make no difference in itself to the prospects of the Cabinet. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has been a consistently able statesman, but in no sense an original or inspiring personality. From that point of view, Lord Goschen's retirement at the previous reconstruction, though regarded with inexplicable apathy by the nation, was of much greater moment. Other alterations will be judged as they may be made. The one topic upon which the country now waits with curiosity for full light to be thrown is that of the future relative positions of Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain in Parliament. More distinctly than any other modern Ministry the present is a Dual Government. One desirable result repeatedly urged in these pages has been attained. The Premiership has come back to the House of Commons. It cannot be doubted that the efficiency of our institutions as a whole depends to an immense extent upon

immediate contact between the head of the Government and the popular Chamber. The Premiership ought to remain in the House of Commons, and since Mr. Balfour is to hold the Premiership he ought also to remain in the House of Commons. This alone raises an insuperable objection to the suggestion so often and so easily made that Lord Salisbury's successor should solve the question of his relations with Mr. Chamberlain by retiring to the Upper House and leaving the Colonial Secretary supreme in the Lower. Such a course would hopelessly stultify the nominal head of the administration, and would make the whole arrangement palpably artificial and ridiculous. The new régime, anomalous as it is, will probably subsist as it stands until a General Election brings it to an end.

No higher praise can be given to Mr. Balfour than to say that he is the one statesman who could hope to work with his formidable colleague. But brilliant as he is at some times and disappointing at others, Mr. Balfour is among the most unequal and uncertain of men. Mr. Chamberlain has been somewhat worse than indifferently treated by the party which owes to him practically everything. But he is sure of himself, and the end is perhaps not yet. There has occurred during the war a great alteration in the feeling of the country in regard to party attachments. Hitherto the average Englishman has not been clear as to what his change of mental habit ought to mean in action. He perceives that to place the Opposition in power is necessary to restore the normal efficiency of the party system. Mr. Chamberlain's Premiership would have offered a strong counter-inducement. Mr. Balfour's does not. Whenever the next General Election takes place there can now be little doubt that

the Unionist Party will be excluded from power. If that date should not be distant the real person to whom the

Unionist Party would look for its chances of return to power would not be long in doubt.

The Fortnightly Review.

## A FRIEND OF NELSON.

### CHAPTER VII.

In his description the pastor of the smuggler flock did himself and his fellows certainly no more than justice. After all, they had improved on Congreve's delineation. Reuben Elphick and one or two of my men had pushed off again to fetch their comrades from the ship. The only fear was that they might have a trouble to find her in the dense fog, and I was glad enough to see them all come in together by the cave's mouth, though their report was that the great rollers were beating the ship cruelly and she would soon cease to hold together. It was news that affected my friend the parson not a little; for he had doubtless promised himself to take a portion of his tithes out of her hull when the fog lifted and the roll of the sea dropped, albeit this pleasant prospect had been a trifle bedimmed by the unwelcome discovery that she was a King's ship. The wreckers of those days were notoriously bold on the Sussex coasts, but even they had perforce to pay a respect to the uniform and the ships of the King. Their ranks were largely recruited from discharged crews escaping the clutch of the pressgang. In some cases they did not carry away too pleasant a remembrance of the service, for those were times when the Navy was a rougher business than the softer manners of 1830 have made it.

In the meantime the Parson, with much blandishment, had conducted the rescued French lady to a smaller cave,

abutting on the main one, that he styled the Green Room, by virtue, as I understood, of the great store that it contained of various apparel, the flotsam and the jetsam of many a sad wreck, and, besides, of lace that had not paid the duty, surreptitiously conveyed ashore in the Preventive officer's despite. So within this Green Room, though it was no more than a dark and rather a dank hole in the rock, the lady, by some feminine *diablerie*, had contrived, out of the heterogeneous mass of material, to pick that which was precisely suited to her, so that when she came forth it was as if some transformation scene had been enacted. Much allowance, I do not doubt, will be made for the generosity of youthful fancy, which we lose all too soon, when I say that to me, as she came out into the weird and shifting light of the torches, she seemed like some queen of fairyland with her erect and slightly disdainful bearing and the look of sadness, painful to see on so young a face, in the lines of her mouth—lines that betokened at the same time a proud spirit and firmness of resolve scarcely feminine. Even then I said to myself that he would be a happy man who would win that sadly resolute and almost hard young face into looks of tenderness. I could well imagine, I told myself, a man accepting that beautiful face as a kind of challenge to him, defying all his efforts of chivalrous achievement and manly courtesy to touch it to a tender mood. I wondered much what her history might be, that



had writ its lines so early in her life, and in what relation she might stand to the smirking Frenchman who appeared to be the companion of her exile. Husband and wife I did not judge them from their mutual manner, in spite of the hasty verdict to that effect implied in the description of them as "the Frenchman and his lady" given by my friend the Parson.

"May I be allowed to congratulate you, mademoiselle," I said, "on the use to which you have turned your chance-found wardrobe?"

"Embarras de choix, monsieur," she replied smilingly. "There are laces of my poor country and mantillas of Spain there that might make one think oneself in the cave of Aladdin."

One of these mantillas, I may say, was thrown in a most becoming Spanish fashion about her head—a wise precaution against the damps of the cave; and for the rest her dress was of some soft silky stuff that I have not skill in such things to describe.

"That is a good word," I said, "Aladdin!" (overlooking the improbability of French and Spanish laces in Araby the blest). "I knew there was something I had read of which the scene put me in mind; it is of the Thousand and One Marvellous Nights."

"Would that a good genie could come and fly with us out of this strange prison."

All this she said in a charming manner, using perfect English, but with an accent that made it peculiarly attractive. And then I asked: "Whither is it that you would have the genie carry you? For as I have been permitted to be the means of saving your life, may I not be allowed to be of some further service to you now that we are on shore? I regret that I am the bearer of despatches that do not brook delay; but if any of my men or——"

But at that the little mouth went up into a proud and obstinate *moue*.

"Thank you very much, monsieur," she said, "but I am well provided. I should be sorry to trouble you."

In all my anger at her pride I could not help rejoicing that she had said "I," not "we," which would seem to be including her companion Frenchman as sharer of her life. Nevertheless she turned and talked with him in her own language, which I can speak, and can understand well enough when an Englishman speaks it to me; but when French people get together with their gabbling I cannot make head nor tail of it.

Then we had supper; for Reuben, who seldom forgot the creature comforts, had been careful, on his last voyage to the ship, to bring off some salted meat and biscuit, and I was well pleased with him and the rest of the ship's company that they had not taken the occasion to broach the spirit locker, for at these times the discipline of the Navy is very apt to be relaxed. I took it as a good omen for the resolves, so often formed, as often broken, of my good but thirsty boat-swain that they should come back without, so far as I could see, a bottle of rum in the boats or an excessive quantity in the hold of anyone of theseamen.

Our supper was not a meal for epicures, but we had that best of sauces, a sound hunger, and all, the lady included, acquitted themselves well. For the lady, the Frenchman and myself the meal was set out with some ceremony, and with seats for us on the up-turned ends of barrels. The Parson produced for us some wine of Bordeaux, really of the best. The remainder of the company, leaving us somewhat apart, supped squatting on their haunches or lying on tarpaulins and old sailcloth that formed the carpet of our banquet hall, and continued to show proper deference to the lady's presence by the hushed tones of their voices or the checking of the laugh that came too

loud and ready on a mirthful story. Supper was no sooner over than a heaviness and drooping of the eyelids came to remind me that it was near four-and-twenty hours since I had taken a wink of sleep, the anxious passage of the Channel seeming to require my constant presence on deck. The lady was accommodated in the chamber of the rock that had lately been her tiring-room, and the rest of us sought, each for himself, a sleeping-place in a corner of the great cave. Certainly we had nothing of which we could complain in the welcome received from our hosts, "honest smugglers and wreckers all," as their masquerading leader seemed accurately to describe them; though no doubt they reckoned to make the balance even later on, when the sea should break up our vessel and cast its flotsam and its jetsam. For all their good reception of us, I knew that there must be queer customers amongst them, even as there might be some that were passing honest, according to their lights and their profession; so before falling asleep I called to Reuben and bade him set a watch—himself so long as he should feel bright and wakeful, and then another, whom he could trust, to relieve him when he grew weary—all this for the safety not of my person, for which I had not the slightest reason to fear, but of the despatches that I still carried safe and sound in the pocket of my belt. But before my curiosity would let me sleep I must needs summon the Parson, and beg him tell me something of the history of this wonderful cave of Adullam in which we had found refuge, for a deal of it was evidently the work of men's hands and of men's design.

"Did you and your fellows," I said, "make this wonderful place for yourselves? It is a prodigious work. I should very much like to hear what you could tell me about it."

"Make this work ourselves!" said he,

holding up his hands as if in pious horror at my ignorance. "Is it possible, then, that you have never heard of the famous Parson Darby, my—what shall we say?—predecessor. Yes," he went on with a smile, throwing off his theatrical air for the nonce, "there was a real Parson Darby once. I do not pretend to you any longer that I am a parson, or a Darby, or anything of the kind; only it pleased me for a frolic to pass as this Parson Darby for a time, having discovered the proper clerical robes in a chest that came ashore. Nevertheless, I would have you know that I have some little education and was put to a liberal profession. But I needed freedom, and there was no freedom there; also," he added, with his ready, humorous grin, "there would have been for me, in a little while, less freedom—you understand?" and he made the motion of clapping a pair of handcuffs on the wrists, "had I not gone. It was a fault, sir, I confess it. A fault that a woman led me into, even as women have led men before, from the days of the good father Adam—you know that story."

I professed acquaintance with it, but added that it was the story of Parson Darby and the cave that I would rather hear.

"You shall hear it, sir; or, as I should say, them rather than it, for there are in truth two stories of the making of this cave; though both attribute it to the same undoubted maker, the Parson Darby who was vicar of Eastdene, the village on the Downs just above us, for many years, until his death in 1728. Now I will tell you the better story first. The better is this: that this Parson Darby being bothered with a wife who did not know how to hold her tongue, but was for ever plaguing him with it, bethought him of making for himself this cave of Adullam, or of refuge, whither he could retire and be at peace when his wife's talking be-

came too plaguesome. But that story, though the better and the pleasanter one, is yet hardly to be regarded as the more probable, seeing that however plaguesome a man's wife's tongue might be, he could scarcely need quite so large a cave of refuge for himself as this that he has made. The more likely story is the other: that being a man of some humanity, he had pity on the numbers of shipwrecked sailors that lost their lives on the coast, hanging out lights and ringing bells of nights to guide vessels that had lost their reckoning into the safe harbor of the cave, where the crews might find shelter."

A singular story this, but all inquiries that I have made since tend to show that it has foundation, and that the good Parson Darby was the means of saving not a few lives. At the date of my writing, that is, a quarter of a century later, they are at length putting up a lighthouse on the summit of that high and steep head called the Belle Tante; but Parson Darby's Cave remains still, and can be seen by any that are curious about it, within a short walk by the beach from Birling Gap.

Towards the end of the false Parson Darby's story of his predecessor so heavy a drowsiness overcame me that I had much ado to keep myself awake till its conclusion, whereon, bidding good-night to my entertainer and summoning Reuben to take his first watch, I laid myself down upon the sailcloth for mattress, with a roll of the same by way of pillow, and in a second of time was sound asleep.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Reuben had the order overnight to call me with the first peep of dawn, by which hour in the season of midsummer there might be hope of making our way by the beach to the Gap of Birling that leads up to the village of Eastdene and the Downs. So I was surprised more

than a little, when I opened my eyes, to find the broad daylight coming in through the opening of the cave, no sign of Reuben near me, and myself, so far as I could see, sole occupant of the cave. A suspicion of foul play suggested itself on the instant—they had killed or kidnapped Reuben. Hastily I looked in the belt pocket for my despatches, that were never for long out of my thoughts, waking or sleeping. By all that was most terrible they were gone!

It is to no purpose that I should delay in the effort to express the horror, the blank and utter despair, of that moment. Years, a quarter-century or so, have passed, yet still, even as I write, I feel again the benumbing, paralyzing sensation that took me when I discovered, and by further searching ascertained, that these invaluable papers were not there. For them I had risked my life and that of my ship's company—that was nothing; for their quick delivery I had sacrificed a King's ship—that was enough; but the thing that mattered was that the nation, by their loss, would still be without accurate knowledge of news which it might be essential for England's safety to know.

Then a mood of fierce fury took me, in place of the stupefaction that the first discovery of my loss had caused me. I dashed up the rugged stairway of rock into the upper cave, which gave a good outlook over the sea. It was a beautifully clear morning, and the white cliffs shone where the sun, already high over Beachy Head, struck their points. Seaward I saw men busy about our ship, which still lay much as when we left her, the roll of the sea being considerably less, and scarcely any breeze moving. If it should hold thus there seemed a chance of saving her after all. From that I took a little comfort; but what surprised me beyond measure was that I fancied I could see my own men, in the King's uniform,

working in amicable harmony with our entertainers, the two being easy to distinguish, even at that distance. At the same moment I heard a man's voice below, and hurried back down the stairs. To my astonishment I found the great cave empty. I could see no living thing to account for the voice which most undoubtedly I had heard. More than that, it had struck me as a voice familiar to me; for a moment it seemed to have a ring of Reuben's voice.

And then it began again, almost from my very feet. Undoubtedly it was Reuben's voice, evidently speaking in monologue, addressed to himself. "Reuben Elphick," it said, in a drowsy sing-song; "Reuben Elphick, you be an arrant failure. Drunken sot you be, Reuben Elphick, a disgrace to the uniform you wear. Drunk again you be, Reuben Elphick. Reuben Elphick, you be an arrant failure."

I lifted the edge of the sailcloth, and there the wretch lay on the floor of the cave, drunk still, and had evidently been deeper drunk; all too drunk still to get from him any beginning even of a tale of the night's doings. This much seemed certain, that he had got drunk during his watch and left me to the tender mercy of Parson Darby and his flock, whereof they had not failed to take advantage. So I kicked the wretch heartily, choosing the points that were likely to be most sensitive; but he was occupied too exclusively by his fixed idea—beyond question an excellent one, only too lately conceived—of his life's failure, and the best-directed application of my boot would bring from him nothing at all more original than his sing-song repetition of "Reuben Elphick, Reuben Elphick, you be an arrant failure. Disgrace to the uniform you wear. How many times have I a-told you, Reuben Elphick, as drink was your undoing? And as many times you've a-promised me as never again! There you be, drunk again, drunk on

duty—disgrace to the King's service; did ought to be cut off your grog, and six days' irons, not to say the lashes. Reuben Elphick, you be an arrant failure."

Now this is all fine comedy, I know, and you are bound to laugh in reading it, as I have laughed times without number since in thinking over the figure that Reuben cut, his tarry pigtail all awry and twisted over his mouth, lying there like a sack of biscuit and moralizing to himself. Unfortunately, I was in no mind or mood for comedy at the moment, but just left Reuben with a parting kick harder than ever before, which had the effect of increasing the deep unction of his self-reproof, and therewith bade farewell to the hopeless fellow, to see if there were any sound heads left below. On the beach, which the tide had already laid bare before the cave, I saw two of my fellows in a boat, of whom one quickly got out and came to me as I hailed:

"By whose orders are you waiting?"

"By the quartermaster's, sir," he said.

"And whom do you await?"

"Our orders was to await for you, sir."

"Given by the quartermaster?"

"By the quartermaster, sir."

"Then row me off to the ship; bend to your oars, men. This is more than a life or death affair."

It was a last and desperate resource that I had in mind. With but a single card in hand one plays it. That last card was the magic of the name of Nelson. Pseudo-Parson Darby had quoted to me the verse of Congreve, accepting the description as accurate, in general terms, of himself and flock. I was far from taking the account as an exact one of those who had given us such timely and kindly shelter; nevertheless I knew the shipwrecked mariner to be their fair game and special quarry, and therefore could not doubt their readi-

ness to take all that they might think of value in return for their entertainment. I had small hope of extorting the despatches from the holding of my so-called parson-friend by the force with which I could threaten him or by the menace of the law. He was well used to defy the law, and, moreover, I suspected that if the despatches were indeed in his keeping they would have been long ago placed in safe hiding. But this I did know, that the name of Nelson might have a power to conjure where even the King's name were of no avail. My design, therefore, in rowing out to the wreck was to throw myself on the generosity of this leader of wreckers and smugglers, to tell him that which I had not yet confided to him—that the despatches were under Lord Nelson's own hand, and that the safety of the nation might hang on their delivery. I had to stake all on the result of this appeal.

Parson Darby had thrown his mummery off, and when I stepped aboard my poor ship I saw in him as likely a man as you would wish to meet for any fight or frolic, with a laughing eye, an open brow, and a pleasant way with him. It all confirmed the truth of his own story, that he had fallen from a better station.

I hailed him forward on the sloop, that still lay locked in the fangs of the reef just as we had left her. There was no danger of her sinking, for she could not settle nor budge. There she would remain fixed till the seas broke her up. The men were working aft, so that we could talk in private forward.

"I am come," I said, "to ask your help."

"Well," he replied, "seems to me you are getting it," with a jerk of the head to where his motley fellows were working cordially with my seamen at moving the valuables of a portable kind from the ship into the boats.

"It is not that I mean. I was robbed last night in the cave."

He started with such marked surprise that for a moment I suspected it as a piece of acting. If it was so it was much overdone. "Robbed!" he exclaimed. "Of what?"

"Of my despatches," I said. "They must have been taken off me while I slept."

"And they were of importance?"

"Of the utmost importance. In fact," I said, lowering my voice, "I came straight from Lord Nelson, bearing them to the Admiralty."

With every word that I said the excitement of my hearer grew. At that conclusion, and the mention of Lord Nelson's name, he could contain himself no longer. He hailed four of his fellows to man a boat. "Quick, quick," he said to me. "There is not a moment to lose. Every instant is precious," and therewith he hurried me into the boat, and jumped in after. "Row, for your souls, to Birling Gap."

No doubt this was a man born to lead men. His energy was infectious to that degree that I made no inquiry of him whither we went, but was content to do his bidding and await his explanation. He understood my frame of mind so perfectly that so soon as we were in the boat, before ever I had asked him a question, he began to give me the information for which my soul thirsted. "The Frenchman has got your despatches," he said abruptly.

"The Frenchman!" I echoed in surprise.

"Ay, the Frenchman, whom all the fiends confound! or rather, I should say, the Frenchman and his lady. This is how the game was played last night, as soon as you were snoring. The lady, you may remember, was already gone to her roost in the inner cave. Within half an hour of your lying down the Frenchman came to me. He said the lady was suffering. Could I give him



some *eau de vie*; that might perhaps relieve her? Ladies in distress appeal to me. It is my weakness. I gave him a bottle of cognac of the best, and presently he returned to say she was the better of it. But did the bottle return? No. Later, when I turned in for the night, I saw him in close talk with your boatswain, and the bottle of cognac by way of helping in their conversation. A cool hand, I thought, this monsieur. But we are not folks that stand on ceremony. I said nothing. Indeed, I was not sure but that you were a third in their conversation. In fine, I took little heed and turned to sleep. The Frenchman roused me at the gray dawn, asking me to give him and his lady a guide to Birling Gap, as he was in a hurry to be started. Before he went he was at pains to tell me that you desired to be left to lie in the morning without awakening, because you were over-wearied; wherein, if in nothing else, the villain told the truth. And that is the end. Your boatswain I found dead drunk as David's sow. It was no affair of mine. With your men and my own, some in your boats, some in mine, we went to the wreck to do what salvage work we could. Two we left as escort for you when you awaked. And that, my friend, is all I have to tell you; but if you can piece no meaning out of it you jump slower to the facts than I should think of you."

"The Frenchman made my boatswain drunk and stole the despatches. That is what I should piece together for the meaning."

He nodded. Then to the oarsmen, "Row, men, like the devil, row."

The boat went hissing. I looked hard at the man.

"Yes," he said, reading the meaning of that look (this man was meant for better destinies), "it is the truth I am telling. Would it please you that I should swear by anything? There is no oath we fellows make much trouble in.

No, I will say this rather—sense should persuade you more than swearing—for what purpose should we use these papers? What would their value be to us? Ay, there are one or two, maybe (we are wreckers all) would wreck England for the salvage—might sell your papers to the Corsican who rules France. Ah, damme," he said, finally, tired of his argument, "take the truth or leave it. What is the odds to me? Take this for truth and I will help you—leave it, and help yourself."

If ever words rang true, truth rang in these.

"Every word you tell me I believe," I cried, giving my hand to grip the crime-stained hand of this prince of scoundrels. "Yet you tell me facts that point to a theory only; they do not prove it. Still, your notion jumps with mine. Let's follow it. But how?"

"Facts point to a theory; point to a Frenchman too. Follow that theory; follow the Frenchman too. Tell me this one thing. Did the Frenchman know you to carry these despatches?"

"The Frenchman?—no," I said. "No. How could he? Ah—but—yes—I believe I told the lady. She—could she have told him?"

"Could she? Is it woman's way to tell, or not to tell? Bend to your oars, men—harder, harder."

"Reuben Elphick, Reuben Elphick," said I to myself in sad quotation, "you be an arrant failure." But it was with no reference to that poor sot, but to my own achievement, that I applied, in my mind, his drunken phrases. An arrant failure, if ever there was—ship hard aground, despatches in a Frenchman's hands, to be turned to the account of England's enemy.

"But," I said with a sudden flash of recollection, "the Frenchman said he was a Bourbonist."

"Ay, said!" he answered in scorn. "The Frenchman said! What other card had he to play?"

Then I turned in scorn of myself to the water that rippled past the boat so pleasantly, so placidly. The morning was so beautiful it mocked my misery. I cursed myself that I had allowed myself to sleep; I cursed my folly in set-

ting such as Reuben Elphick on the watch. I cursed my babbling tongue that had told the woman of the despatches, and I cursed all womankind and all the spawn of France from the first French Eve.

Horace G. Hutchinson.

Longman's Magazine.

(To be continued.)

## ABOUT PLAYGOERS.

Why do people go to the theatre?

I have asked the question at random of all sorts and conditions of men and women. "They don't," was the growling answer of a sportsman. "It forms an agreeable interval between two meals," I learnt from a man about town. A middle-aged bachelor decided the point, "Because they can't get a fourth for bridge." A husband's excuse was, "For domestic peace." The same problem propounded to women resulted in such solutions as—"to show off my best frock"; "because every one else does"; "because we know the Trees and the Alexanders"; "to keep me awake until it is time to go to a party"; "I must do *something* in the evening."

You may read these answers plainly written on the faces, and in the attitudes, of the playgoers of to-day, in their late-comings and their early goings, in their restlessness, their inattention, and their gossipings; and you can hear these reasons echoed in their subsequent opinions of any play and its performers. You ask: "How did you like the theatre last night?" and for answer you hear—"I adored Mary Moore's second frock," or "Those horses are such dear things," or "What's-his-name, the fellow had not the first idea how to put on a hunting-stock," or "The curtain stuck on the wings, and it looked so funny."

The great British public, however intelligent and sympathetic it may be in units, is gregariously stupid, it takes its pleasure stupidly and so the really popular entertainment must also be more or less stupid. This appears to be the gist of the situation, for the multitudes see not, neither do they hear, since they look not, neither do they listen. Herein for instance, is the explanation of the enormous success of "musical comedy," with its irrelevant trivialities, its disconnected items, its ample chorus, and its scant wit. Any attempt to produce thoughtful drama, however interesting or vital, appeals only to the few and rare; and the aim of the author, together with the achievements of the actors, passes unnoticed by the many who lack the intelligence to perceive or the ambition to understand. Hence a run of three months is the average possibility of the successful play, whilst a run of three years is the feasible probability of a musical comedy.

The patronage of the opera by society does not, of course, affect the question. It cannot even be accredited to love of music, but rather to the dictates of fashion. A large subscription list accordingly transforms the house into a social club, where the same men and women may meet each other every night, and find their feast and harmony well served with the pop-

ular *hors-d'œuvres* of gowns and gossip.

It is not easy to become an expert listener, to understand the secrets of the great arts of acting and of play-writing, to appraise accurately the measure of success achieved, or to sympathize intelligently with the causes of failure. But, at least, we may all endeavor to understand; we may all try to find in the supreme exhibition of supreme talents, as much interest as in polychromatic manœuvres with the electric light, or the discreet indiscretions of a voiceless songstress.

There is no just cause why men and women should assume an interest in a play if they do not feel it, but the condition of dramatic literature is jeopardized by the unfortunate yet incontrovertible fact that half the people in the theatre do not listen to the play; they do not go to the theatre for that purpose, and it is almost impossible to persuade them to do so. They go there, as I have suggested, for some extraneous reason far removed from a desire to follow what is proceeding on the stage, and they give their attention either not at all, or in the most perfunctory fashion.

The power of concentrating their thoughts elsewhere than upon themselves is perhaps the one grace denied to our latter-day omniscients, for, even while confronted with the work of their crowned king of dramatists, A. W. Pinero, they fail to mark and comprehend his meaning. This was conspicuously evident during the run of *Iris*, when the true inwardness of the situation between the lovers escaped general recognition, not through any fault of the author, who had told his story clearly in word and action. The relations between *Iris* and her boy-lover were often and persistently discussed and questioned, doubted and disputed; yet, how obviously they were foreshadowed in the first act,

and how distinctly they were revealed in the farewell scene! No, the average playgoer does not listen, and he must be persuaded, or lured, or forced, to take heed, lest this sleeping sickness of indifference, which now but stifles his desire to observe, should come to kill his capacity for perception.

At the same time, it must be allowed that earnestness may extend to inconvenient lengths. The pleasure of witnessing one of Shakespeare's plays has before now been damped by the too studious and punctilious neighbor who, reading the play during its performance, will compare the text written with the text spoken, while menacing frowns chase each other across his brow, and impatient grunts issue from his mouth, as the omitted phrase meets his pedantic eye.

Another unpleasant phase of earnestness shows itself in the playgoer who attends the theatre with a fixed determination to combat the actor's interpretations. In every character he sees a different aspect from the one presented, and he insists upon recognizing in the most trivial sentence the weightiest meaning, while he propounds and solves problems in the psychology and the dramatic situation never dreamt of in the philosophy of the dramatist. To his mind everything is the symbol of something else, and if you meet him in argument you will find your optimistic soul steeped in a deluge of despairing doubt.

The first-night audience—and fourths of this are identical at every theatre—is an audience apart, its verdict is seldom significant, and it must not be confounded with the general body of playgoers. It is composed of more or less important persons, anxious to be in evidence, regarding the play and its exploiting with a minimum of interest, having little real sympathy with the anxiety of the manager, the trials of the author, and the nervous-

ness of the performers, but mainly concerned with the fact of their own existence. Often it would seem as if this assemblage were as eager for the excitement of a failure as of a triumph. Among the men will be not a few who more than hint that "these actors take themselves too seriously," whilst among the women will be a kind of fluttering underthought that they would like to attend another "first night" soon. The applause is superficial, when not blatantly personal, and the dull impartiality of the prevailing dramatic critic forbids any unanimous approval from the stalls. Here the well-known actress who is "resting" will languidly tap her gloved hands together, while she plaintively commiserates the leading lady on being cast for a part so entirely unsuited to her; while the disappointed dramatist realizing the injustice of the world and the cruel prejudice against his work, recalls to a journalistic neighbor the fact that some few years ago he submitted this same plot to this same manager, to fit whose style and personality, however, he has another drama quite ready for acceptance. The few ladies of Society who occupy the boxes and the stalls on a first night are absorbed in the arrangement of their dresses, and the arrival of acquaintances in their near vicinity; while the young men are frankly concerned with the earliest moment the curtain will fall, so that their cigarettes and the Carlton may receive their entire attention. As a proof of the insincerity of their devotion to the drama and its exponents, I may quote the fact that men and women of this particular little world will not go to a play on any but a first night; they want to be heard and to be seen, not to hear and to see.

The "first-night" audience, as I have said, is generally the same at most of the theatres, though, of course at such

houses as the Lyceum, Her Majesty's, Wyndham's, and the St. James, there is a leaven of dignity, of social and intellectual distinction, that is wanting from the *premieres* at the homes of lighter entertainment, and less prestige. But of late years a new element has made itself evident at certain theatres; this is the mysterious body known as "The Syndicate." It is a hungry creature, and it thinks to fatten on musical comedy. To watch it during the production of one of these pieces is curious. The impression given is that of a band of plotting pirates, whispering together portentously through the entire performance, leaving the box in a body at every *entr'acte*, to return violently gesticulating, and evidently full of the most convincing arguments. The presence of these worthies is coincident with that of many lesser lights of the theatrical profession in the stalls; these ladies either coming in twos and being interested only in each other's jewelry and laces, or being accompanied by some well-known financial magnate, when they set their sister-artists to the pleasing task of realizing the first rule of arithmetic, one and one make two.

The popular custom of tardy arrival is as noticeable upon a first night as on any other; and no matter at what hour the curtain may rise—at 7.30 or at 9.15—people will stroll into their seats at their leisured pleasure. The prevalence of indifference could not be better proved, and with due regard to this, and the possibilities of misinterpretation, it might be wise if managers who present drama of serious purpose would print a  *précis*  of the plot and its progression, so that the threads could be gathered up at any moment of entry. No true lover of the theatre would intentionally arrive five minutes after the curtain had gone up on the first scene, and yet you will find

that all the stalls and dress circle are filled "a little late," while we have seen but recently that an attempt at authoritative interference with this practice is resented as an outrage on the liberty of the subject, and openly defied. "I have paid for my seat and I shall use it at my convenience": that is the attitude of the Briton who never will be a slave, even to courtesy; so the nuisance is perpetually committed, and this primary act of callousness to the play and the players is a prelude to others scarcely less offensive.

These occupants of the stalls and the dress circle arrive in large or small parties, and seem to find the theatre a most convenient place for gossip. They will, during the progress of the play, discuss with each other such vital points as the departure of a housemaid, the delinquencies of a lover, and the extravagance of a dressmaker, while they devote of course their best attentions to the appalling misdemeanors of some other woman. Any attempt to hush them into silence is met with indignant insult, and the prattle proceeds through the entire evening; while during the last moments of the last act it is diversified by an openly expressed anxiety for supper, and a noisy rustling into cloaks.

I have had the privilege of listening to a most heartrending discussion between husband and wife in the stalls of a theatre, when he pleaded and she turned a cold shoulder, and he protested and she refused; the whole comedy or tragedy maybe, being enacted during a performance of *Much Ado about Nothing*. Yet, perhaps, these combatants were little less distressing and embarrassing than a tender pair of lovers, lacking the sweet quality of reticence, and absorbed in the question as to whether June or July would be the better date for their marriage.

Even the dead-head has altered his conduct. "I must applaud because I have not paid for my seat" showed an old-fashioned prejudice in favor of good manners. "Perish their importance; I like nothing, and I care nothing," says the dead-head of to-day, and he is the first to discover a draught and the last to condone a wait. Yet, "Dear sir,—Would you give me a seat for to-morrow night?" has become the order of his existence, and he continues to follow it punctually.

Some dead-heads, however, are especially valuable, and amongst these may be counted the servants of the Church. Only certain theatres will they visit, only certain plays do they deem worthy of their patronage, and it may be correctly hazarded that the managers gladly admit them with orders—holy orders. Their attitude is invariably one of interest, no doubt a fellow-feeling as public speakers making them wondrous attentive; for no idle companion ever gets from them encouragement to chatter, or to stray for one minute from the direct path of the listener.

Now, no one would insist that play-going is the serious business of life, but few would deny that it may be regarded as the serious pleasure, and that to witness an interesting play well acted may stimulate the imagination and satisfy the intellectual interpretation of the word enjoyment. There is no need to press the point to the Utopian theory of a well-known critic—that, after seeing a good play of domestic sentiment and high intention, "we leave the theatre wiser, better, purer." The following occurrence, for which I can personally vouch, may testify otherwise. It was in the old days of the German Reed entertainment at St. George's Hall.

A lady, hurriedly pressing through the departing crowd, trod upon the foot of another.



"Clumsy beast!" muttered the latter irately.

"What words from a lady's mouth!" said the first in shocked surprise.

"What a hoof on a lady's leg!" was the retort, accompanied by a supercilious stare of contempt.

And these two had just been sitting through a simple modest little story of affection and filial piety. If the theory of the drama's immediate influence were true, I tremble to think what would have been the language of such an incident after a performance—let us say—of the Stage Society.

Yet, it is on record that a passion-tossed man with murder in his heart, after witnessing *The Bells*, wrote to Henry Irving, in all humility and gratitude, that his vivid portrayal of the torture-haunted innkeeper had saved him from a desperate crime. Many of our dramatists could tell of similar epistolary testimony to the moral influence of their plays on the morbid consciences of impressionable playgoers. Whether this influence outlasts the virtuous impulse of the letter-writer may be questioned, but certainly a play like *The Profligate* provides the nether regions with plenty of the proverbial paving.

Yet, at least, there is evidence that impressionable, earnest playgoers still exist, though we must regret that they are in so small a minority. We must remember they have founded clubs—and disorganized them—and, in spite of exhortations from distinguished men of letters, they continue to occupy the gallery and the pit; while, in displaying their primeval instincts to shout when they are glad, and groan when they are sorry, they supply indeed a grateful note of sincerity—long may they reign aloft!

It would seem that there are two or three actors in London—it would be invidious to name them—whose influence upon their audience is direct and

personal. The playgoer who visits their theatres does so because he wants to see the leading actor; it matters little what he is playing, or with whom: here it is the man, the individual, who attracts, and these actors suffer less than any others from the prevalent jealousy of their calling. At the same time they often overshadow the creator of the play which affords them their opportunity.

In spite of the great prominence now given in the periodical press to all matters connected with the theatre, it is not a little disconcerting to find that a large proportion of those who seek entertainment in the playhouse, or go there for mere pastime, neither know nor care who wrote the play, while they never think of regarding it from the point of view of a work of art expressive of a certain writer's individuality. In the provincial and suburban pits the programme is seldom consulted as to the author's identity, while even in West End theatres, where one might expect the audiences to be more "in the movement," one constantly hears Messrs. Pinero, Jones, Grun- dy, Hadden Chambers, and Carton credited with each other's work. I have even heard a melodrama by Mr. Cecil Raleigh attributed to the author of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*! But our dramatists may take comfort from the story of the old laborer who had lived his life out at Stratford-on-Avon, watching the pilgrims come and go for more than half a century, and, on being asked, "Who was this Shakespeare?" scratched his head for some minutes, and replied doubtfully, "I be'ant quite sure, I think he writ the Boible."

But, if the reputation of artists gains nothing from, and even suffers at, the hands of the ignorant playgoer, he is less ridiculous than the pretentiously omniscient person. We all have met the man who declares he was invited to

consultation before the play was accepted, his advice asked as to the choice of the cast, and his decision taken as final in regard to all the details of the production. No less are we acquainted with the woman who talks of all the actors and actresses by their Christian names, and retails with much pride anecdotes intended to reveal the intimacy of her relations with them.

"Doesn't Cyril look sweet?" I heard a gushing young maiden exclaim at the Haymarket Theatre, innocently regardless of the fact that Mr. Maude's part was being played on that occasion by an understudy.

It must be granted that the attitude towards the play and players is everywhere more respectful, more interested, and more earnest than it is in London. Different countries have, of course, different manners, and whereas the American, admittedly the most sincere lover of the theatre, will, like the Snark of fable, "softly and silently vanish away" if the entertainment be not to his fancy, the Englishman, who comes to laugh, remains to boo if his expectations are not fulfilled; the Frenchman shows his characteristic exuberance in joy as well as in despair; and the forceful character of the German is displayed by his liking for short prices and long programmes. Here in town we seem to grow yearly more frivolous and flippant, and less sincere, while an engrossing egotism combined with a flagrant commercialism stultifies a sense of appreciation of the fine arts, of which, by the way, Voltaire accounted acting the finest.

The public and confidential intimacies of the newspaper interview, and what one might call the refereedom of the personal paragraph, supplemented by the photograph postcard, may have done much to cheapen the artistic influence of the theatre, through arousing an interest in the private lives of

the players. Yet I would not quarrel with this interest, for it breathes popularity for the actor and the actress, who might as well retire as attempt to exist upon the stage without it. Nor would I so far affect the *laudator temporis acti*—a favorite pose, by the way, of the pleader for reform—as to suggest that the playgoer who was wont to revel in the acting of a David Garrick or a Mrs. Siddons would not equally have gratified his curiosity concerning their personalities in private had the opportunities of intimate publicity been what they are to-day. Indeed, is it not on record that Edmund Kean himself was hissed on the stage for the exposure of a moral delinquency when he should have been applauded for the triumphant exposition of his glorious art? And were not the frail favorites of the stage in the period of elegant manners pilloried in scandalous pamphlets if only they were beautiful, talented, and frail enough to make the pamphlets saleable? And did not the quarrels of rival actresses, obstreperous actors, and oppressive managers make racy reading, and provide the talk of the town? And all this irrespective of the play and the author!

Yet we have an idea that in the old days people who went to the play went primarily for the sake of the play, or the acting, or both; anyhow we like to think that they did. We like to believe in a sturdy race of playgoers of the past, who attended the theatre with the honest intention of giving themselves heart and soul to the play and its interpretation, recking not of the paltry scenery and tawdry irrelevant costume, and just content to be moved to the depths of their being by "two boards and a passion." We like to picture such an audience, with a Hazlitt and a Charles Lamb in the midst of it, opening the floodgates of its enthusiasm, and helping to make immortal reputations.

And yet—and yet, when we ask where are the plays of yester-year, the great plays that such intelligent playgoers ought to have demanded for a Garrick, a Kemble, and a Kean, we find that not only are these as non-existent as the Crawford-Humbert millions, but that Shakespeare himself in shoddy mutilated forms satisfied those critical playgoers of the past, and we begin to suspect that the illusion of tradition is before us, and theatrical audiences in England were no less gregariously unintelligent a century or so ago than they are to-day. But that they used to put more heart into their playgoing, that they listened less perfunctorily, we may believe, and it is just this whole-heartedness of attention that our present playgoing so sadly lacks. We have the actors, the managers, and the dramatists, capable of producing a great national drama,

The Nineteenth Century and After.

what is wanted are audiences eager to make it possible, alert with sympathy, and anxious to encourage it and give it welcome. Is it too much to expect that people shall go to the theatre bent on bringing to the appreciation of the art which is set before them, all that is artistically responsive in themselves? That they shall meet thought with thought, imagination with imagination, that they shall listen and look with their brains as well as their senses?

When it is generally recognized that the stage, and not the *coulisse*, is the real object of the playgoer's attention, then perhaps a theatrical millennium will arrive, and author, actor, manager, audience, and even critic, will be as a happy family linked by one common interest—the building of a great living dramatic literature.

E. Aria.

## HERE'S A HEALTH UNTO HIS MAJESTY.

### NEW VERSION.

Here's a health unto His Majesty,

With our hands all round and round!

Conversion to his enemies,

And may his friends abound!

And he who will not fill his glass

And bid the foaming bottle pass

Is just a rebel rogue or ass,

Not to join our hip, hip, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!

Not to join our hip, hip, hip, hurrah!

Here's a health unto His Majesty

From us farmers one and all!

If you'd touch the top of farmery,

At Sandringham you'll call,

And learn a lesson from your King

In cote and byre and everything

That stock and flock to best doth bring.

With a hip, hip, hip, hurrah, hurrah!  
With a hip, hip, hip, hurrah!

Here's a health unto His Majesty

From his men in hunting pink,  
Who proudly chant his sportsmanship

As glass to glass they chink;  
"He rode no easy featherweight,  
Yet never looked for gap or gate,  
But ever like a king rode straight!"  
So it's hip, hip, hip, &c.

Here's a health unto His Majesty

From his sons who rule the sea,  
For he is Ocean's Emperor,  
And to the end shall be.

A skipper staunch, he's aye at home  
Upon the waves, and loves the foam  
From off their hoary crests to comb!  
So it's hip, hip, hip, &c.

Here's a health unto His Majesty

From all good men and true  
Who stood for his supremacy—  
Who stood and overthrew.  
For surely every soldier saith,  
"He's had as bold a bout with death  
As any Briton who draws breath."  
So it's hip, hip, hip, &c.

Here's a health unto His Majesty

And to his lovely Queen,  
So wifely and so motherly,  
So noble and serene.  
Long may they live! long may they reign  
And may we all be here again  
As good a health to them to drain!  
With a hip, hip, hip, &c.

*The Author of "Father O'Flynn."*

## THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW.

They were cutting Farmer Sibley's largest hayfield; it was eleven o'clock, and the men had just "knocked off" for the light meal known in those parts as "nuncheon." A big flagon of cider was being passed round from one to the other, accompanied by goodly slices of bread and cheese. The farmer himself stood a little apart under the shade of a large elm which grew midway in the hedgerow that divided this field from its neighbor, paying a half scornful attention to the scraps of talk with which the laborers seasoned their meal. He himself was not given to self-indulgence, and inwardly chafed at the loss of this half-hour from the busiest time of the day. He had worked as hard as any of his men, and was, indeed, hardly to be distinguished from them, except by the better quality of his clothes. He was a tall, strong-looking fellow, with a face as sunburnt as any of theirs, and arms as muscular and brown. He was coatless, and wore a great chip hat; his shirt-sleeves were rolled up above his elbows, and his shirt was open at the throat. Two teams of horses stood in the shadow of the hedge, plucking at the twigs or stretching down their necks towards the grass which they could not reach; the vast field, half cut, lay shimmering before him in a blaze of light; the dome overhead glowed almost to whiteness, for the sun at this hour was intolerably hot. Yet even as the master gazed, impatiently longing for the moment when he could set his hands to work again, he saw a figure rapidly crossing the field, looking from right to left, as though in search of someone. It was the figure of a young woman; so much he could divine from the shapely outline and springing ease of motion, but her face was at first lost to him under the deep shade of her

broad-brimmed hat. She approached the group of laborers first, and made some query in a tone too low for him to distinguish the words. He saw his foreman, however, turn towards the tree beneath which he himself stood and jerk his thumb over his shoulder. Evidently the young woman had come in search of him.

She made her way towards him, walking more slowly and indicating by her aspect a certain amount of diffidence. A comely girl—he could see that now—dark-eyed, dark-haired, and glowing with health and life.

"If you please, sir," she began timidly, "I came—my father sent me. It's about the taxes."

She drew from her pocket a little blue paper of familiar aspect; the demand note for the rates collected four times a year by the Overseers for the Branstone Union. The angry color glowed in Jacob Sibley's face as he twitched the paper from her hand.

"What's the meaning of this?" he cried; "what have you got to do with it?"

"I am Isaac Masters' daughter, of Little Branstone," she said hastily. "He collects the rates for our parish, but he's very ill in bed. He's had a stroke, poor father has, and I'm doing his work for him."

"He should have known better than to send you to me," returned Jacob, still wrathfully. "I never heard such a tale in my life. Sendin' a maid to collect the rates! Dally! Where will the women-folk stop?"

"Nobody else made any objection," said the girl, with a little toss of her head. "I've got it all right, except yours; and father thought I'd best come and ask for it."

"Then you can tell your father as he



did make a very great mistake," thundered Sibley. "'Tis bad enough to be bothered about they dalled rates wi'out havin' a woman set up over you."

He tore the paper into fragments as he spoke, scattering them to the breeze. "There, you just turn about and go home-along, my maid, and tell your father that's my answer. If your father bain't fit to do his work hissel', he did ought to get somebody else to do it for en—some other man. The notion o' sendin' a maid! I never did hear o' sich a piece o' cheek!"

The girl, without waiting for the end of his indignant commentary, had turned about as he had advised, and was now walking swiftly away, her head held very high, angry tears on her thick lashes. Jacob impatiently jerked out his watch; it wanted still ten minutes of the time when work would have to be resumed. He dropped the watch into his pocket again, whistling under his breath, a good deal out of tune. Once more fragments of the men's talk reached his unwilling ears.

"That be Bethia Masters, that be—a wonderful good maid. They d' say the wold man 'ud be fair lost wi'out her. The Parish Council did give her leave to take his place for a bit so long as there was a chance he mld get better." "She be a shapely maid and a vitty one." "E-es, she's well enough; looks a bit tired now, walkin' i' the heat three mile here and three mile back." "E-es, and a sarcin' at the end o't," chuckled one old fellow under his breath. "Our Maister he did gl' 't to her! I heerd en. Our Maister bain't partial to payin' rates at any time, and he didn't reckon for to hand over his money to a 'ooman."

Farmer Sibley watched the retreating figure idly; it was true she was a shapely maid. How lightly and rapidly she walked: 'twas a long way, too—three miles and more. He could have wished he had not been quite so hard

with her. He might have asked her to sit down and rest for a while; he might have offered her a glass of cider. He almost wondered at his own outburst of irritation as he looked back on it now, and watched the girl's retreating form with an increasing sense of shame.

The toilsome day was over at last, the horses stabled, the men fed. Farmer Sibley was smoking the pipe of peace in his trellised porch with a pleasant sense of weariness. It was good to rest here under the honey-suckle in the twilight, and to think of how much had been accomplished during the long sunny hours which had preceded it.

The sound of a light foot caused him to raise his eyes, which he had partially closed a few moments before, and the ensuing click of the garden gate made him sit upright and crane forward his head. A girl's figure was making its way down the little paved path, a girl's voice once more greeted him tremulously.

"If you please, Mr. Sibley, I'm sorry to trouble you, but—"

Jacob Sibley in the evening was a different person to the Jacob Sibley of the fields; he stretched out his hand and drew her forward by the sleeve.

"Sit down, my maid," he said; "sit ye down. You've a-had a longish walk, and for the second time to-day, too."

Bethia came into the shadow of the porch; her face looked pale in the dim light, and he could see the bosom of her light dress rise and fall quickly with her rapid breath.

"If you please, sir," she began again, "I know you'll be vexed, but father, he's very much undone about the taxes. He'll be gettin' into trouble, he says, if he doesn't send the money off to-morrow. He made me come back and ask you again. We'd take it very kind if you'd let us have what's owing, sir."

Her tremulous tone smote Jacob;

stretching out his big hand once more, he patted her shoulder encouragingly.

"There, don't ye be afeared, my maid; don't ye. I'll not bite ye."

A dimple peeped out near Bethia's lip. "You very nearly did bite me this morning," she said.

"Nay, now," returned Jacob, smiling beneath his thick beard, "I weren't a-goin' to bite ye; I was on'y barkin', maid. Lard, if you did know I, you'd say wi' the rest of 'em that my bark was worse nor my bite. There! what about this trifle o' money as I owe for the rates? How much is it? Dally! I don't know how 'tis, but it fair goes agen me to pay out money for taxes. It do seem so unfair when a man's farm's his own—land and house and all—for Government to go and say, 'You've a-got a house, and you've a-got land as your father and grandfather have a-bought wi' their own money—you must pay out for that, my lad; you must hand over whatever we pleases to ax for.' 'Tisn't as if they'd consult a man. If they was to say to I, 'Mr. Sibley, you be a warmish man, and there's a good few poor folk up i' the union; what be you willin' to allow us for them?' I'd call that fair enough, and I'd tell 'em straight out what I *was* willin' to 'low. But no; they goes and settles it all among theirselves wi' never a word to nobody, and jist sends out a paper wi'out by your leave or wi' your leave, 'You be to pay so much, whether you do like it or whether you don't.' 'Tain't fair."

"I dare say it isn't, sir," rejoined Bethia, very meekly; "but I'm not askin' you on account of the Government—I'm jist askin' you for father's sake. He's fretting terribly, and the doctor says he oughtn't to upset himself."

"Well, I don't mind if I do make an end o' this here business for your father's sake, maldy; but I d' 'low I'd jist so soon do it for yours."

"For mine!"

"E-es, because you do ask I so pretty. I did speak a bit sharp to ye this mornin', but it was along o' being vexed wi' the Government—I wasn't really vexed wi' you, my dear."

Bethia began to laugh; her little white teeth flashed out in the most charming way—her bright eyes lit up. Jacob gazed at her with increasing favor.

"I bain't vexed wi' you, my dear," he repeated affably, and then, suddenly standing up, darted into the house. In a few minutes he emerged again, carrying a little packet, which he handed to her.

"It be all there, wrapped up i' that bit o' paper; you'd best count it and see as it be right. Will ye take a glass o' milk or summat?"

"No, thank you, Mr. Sibley; I'm very much obliged, but I think I must be getting home now. It's growing dark, and my father will be anxious."

"Wouldn't you like nothin'?" insisted Jacob. "A posy o' flowers or summat? There's a-many of 'em growin' i' the garden, and nobody ever thinks for to pick 'em."

"Of course not; a man does not care for such things, I know. You live all alone, don't you, Mr. Sibley?"

"All alone, my maid, since my poor mother died. She went to the New House fifteen year ago. I'm what you mid call a reg'lar wold bachelor, I be."

He threw out this last remark with such an obvious wish to be contradicted that Bethia hastened to return, "Not so old as that, I'm sure, Mr. Sibley. My father always speaks of you as a young man."

"I be jist upon farty," returned Jacob, with surprising promptitude. "Farty; that be my age. Not so old for a man."

"Not at all old," returned Bethia, very politely; then, extending her hand, "I'll say good-night now, sir."

"Won't you have a posy, then? Do.

Help yourself, my maid. I'll walk a piece o' the way home wi' you, and then you needn't be afeard."

"Very well, and thank you kindly."

She followed him out of the porch, and up a path that led round the house to the old-fashioned garden at the rear, where there were roses, and lilies, and pinks, and sweet williams growing in a glorious medley. She uttered little shrieks of delight, as she ran hither and thither, breaking off here a cluster of roses, there a lily-head. Jacob stalked silently behind her, clasp-knife in hand, cutting ten stalks where she had culled one, until at last a very sheaf of flowers rested in his arms.

"I'll have to go all the way to carry it for you," he remarked in a satisfied tone.

Bethia turned and clapped her hands together. "Oh, what a lot! I never thought you were going to get all those for me. How shall I ever thank you?"

"I'll carry it for you," repeated Jacob. "This way out, my dear; there's a little gate jist here."

A faint after-glow still lingered on the horizon, but already the silver sickle of the young moon appeared in the transparent sky. A bat circled round their heads from time to time, yet some love-lorn thrush serenaded his mate somewhere not far off, his liquid ecstatic notes filling the air, as it seemed. Great waves of perfume were wafted to Bethia's nostrils as she paced along beside the farmer, whose tall figure towered over her, the silhouette of his face showing clear above the irregular line of hedge. As they walked he questioned her from time to time, and learned how the girl had only come back to live with her parents within the past year, having been absent for some time teaching in a school at Dorchester.

"School-teachin'!" commented Jacob. "That be how you do speak so nice and clear. I speak awful broad myself—never had much eddication."

"Hadn't you?" returned Bethia, with interest.

"Nay, never had no time for that. My father, he died when I were a lad, and my mother weren't one as could manage a farm so very well. She was a bit soft, my poor mother, and very easy taken in. So I did put my shoulder to the wheel, and I mid say I've been a-shovin of it ever since."

"I wonder you didn't get married, Mr. Sibley," said Bethia, with perhaps a suspicion of archness in her voice.

Jacob only grunted in reply, and an embarrassed silence fell between them, and remained unbroken till they had reached Little Branstone village.

Jacob accompanied the girl down the by-lane which led to her home, and followed her into the kitchen; there, however, he refused to stay, in spite of Mrs. Masters' civil request that he would sit down and rest.

"Nay," he returned gruffly, "I'll be gettin' home-along now; I only come so far to carry this here posy."

Depositing his fragrant sheaf upon the table, he nodded right and left at mother and daughter, and withdrew.

"Dear! Well, to be sure! Dear heart alive, Bethia, ye could ha' knocked I down wi' a feather when he come marchin' in. Lard ha' mercy me, maldy, you be clever to ha' got Jacob Sibley for a beau. That there man do fair hate women of all sarts. There, he do never so much as look at one—and to think of him a-walkin' all that long ways jist for to carry them flowers! He did give you the flowers, too, I suppose?"

"Yes," returned her daughter; "but you mustn't call him my beau, please mother. He only meant to be polite."

"Well, I'm sure he did never try to be polite to any maid afore," returned Mrs. Masters with conviction. "They do say he were crossed i' love when he were a young 'un. Did he give 'ee the money, child?"

"Yes, mother, and was very nice and kind altogether. I think he was sorry for father when I told him how ill he'd been."

"Oh, to be sure, that's it," agreed her mother jocosely. "All they flowers be for father, too, I d' 'low. Come, let's fetch 'em up to en,"

Poor old Masters, ill though he was, chuckled feebly on hearing the marvelous tale, and expressed in quavering tones his belief that his daughter was a-doin' pretty well for herself.

The girl, who had lived till now absolutely heart-whole, could not repress a certain flutter of excitement, and passed the next few days in a state of expectancy; but Jacob Sibley gave no further sign of life. Though he appeared at church on Sunday, he kept his face religiously turned away from the pretty tax-gatherer's, and at the conclusion of the service rushed from the door without pausing to look round.

Bethia bit her lip, and instead of dallying a little, as was her custom, to chat with one or other of her acquaintance, hastened home.

"Were Farmer Sibley there, my dear?" inquired her mother.

"Yes, but he didn't speak to me—he didn't take a bit of notice of me. Put that notion out of your head, mother—there's nothing at all between him and me."

Soon the attention of the little household was entirely absorbed by a more acute and immediate cause of trouble: poor old Masters, after a brave struggle, and in spite of the adjurations of his neighbors, found himself unable to "hold on"; he loosed his feeble grasp of life suddenly at last, and went out, as his wife sorrowfully remarked, "like the snuff of a candle."

After the funeral was over, the question of ways and means stared the mother and daughter in the face. Mrs. Masters did a little business—a very little business—with a small general

shop; it was quite insufficient to support them. Her health was not good, and Bethia was determined not to leave her; there was no opening for her as a teacher in that village, and such sums as she might earn by taking in sewing would add very little to their modest income. She resolved to make a bold appeal to the Parish Council for permission to continue to fill her father's place.

"I could do it every bit as well as a man," she averred. "I have done it during the last few months. The accounts are all in order—I have found no difficulty anywhere. Do let me try, gentlemen."

The gentlemen in question were at first taken aback, then amused, finally moved. After all, they said to each other, there was no reason why the girl should not try. So long as the duties were discharged exactly and punctually, there was no reason why they should not be undertaken by a woman as well as by a man.

"But there must be no favoritism, Miss Masters," said one, with a twinkle in his eye; "no letting off of any particular friend. You must be firm, even with your nearest and dearest. If people don't pay up after two or three applications, you must harden your heart and take out a summons."

"I will," said Bethia seriously.

In a few days the news of her installation as assistant overseer spread through the place, one of the first to hear of it being Jacob Sibley.

Bethia was standing in the kitchen shelling peas one morning when his knock came at the door, almost immediately followed by the appearance of his large person from behind it.

"Be this here true what I've a-heerd?" he inquired abruptly. "Be it true as you be a-goin' to carry on this rate-collecting same as your father did do?"

"Yes, Mr. Sibley," answered Bethia, not without a certain pride. "The Par-

ish Council gentlemen think I can do it just as well as anybody; and I'm glad to say they've agreed to let me try."

"I don't agree, then," cried Jacob violently. "It bain't at all fit nor becomin' for a young 'ooman same as you to be a-goin' about from house to house, visitin' folks and axin' them for their money. It bain't proper, I tell 'ee."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Bethia, with a toss of her pretty curly locks. "What's it to you, Mr. Sibley, anyhow?"

"I don't like it," growled Sibley. "Will you go and ax folks for it, same as you did ax I?"

"I shall leave a little note first," said Bethia, with a very businesslike air, "a demand note, you know. If they don't pay up I shall call personally."

"It bain't the right thing for a faymale," repeated Sibley sourly; "least of all for a young faymale. Folks 'ull be givin' ye impidence."

"Oh, no, they won't," returned Bethia, with dignity. "I'm not one that anybody could take liberties with, Mr. Sibley."

He stood leaning against the table, frowning.

"Will ye ax 'em rough-like, or will ye ax 'em civil?" he required, after ruminating for a while.

"Why, of course I shall be civil, Mr. Sibley."

"Will ye ax 'em so civil as ye did ax I?" he insisted, with a kind of roar.

"I'm sure I don't know," stammered the girl, taken aback for a moment. "Yes," recovering herself, "certainly I shall. There's no reason why I should make any difference between you and anybody else."

"You tell I that to my face! You'll go a-speakin' 'em soft and a-smilin' at 'em pretty, jist same as ye did do to I! Dalled if I do allow it! Dalled if I do, I say!"

"Really, Mr. Sibley," said Bethia with spirit, "I don't know what you mean.

It's very rude of you to talk to me like that, and I do not see why you should interfere. I shall be businesslike and polite, as I always try to be with everyone, and I shall be firm too. The Law will support me just the same as if I were a man."

"Dalled if I do allow it," repeated Jacob, still in a kind of muffled bellow. "A British ratepayer I be, and have a-been this twenty year and more, and I say I bain't a-goin' to allow it. I know my rights so well as any man, and I bain't a-goin' to be put upon by a 'ooman. I bain't a-goin' to allow any young faymale to be took out of her proper place and set up where she's no business to be. I'll have no faymale tax-collectors a-gaddin' about this here parish if I can prevent it. I'll protest, maid, see if I don't, and, what's more, not one farden o' rates will I pay into any faymale hands."

Bethia, more and more irritated by his manner, thought it time to assert herself finally; and withdrawing her hands from the basin of peas, and looking him full in the face, she returned, with great firmness, "Won't you, Mr. Sibley? Then I'll make you."

"Lard ha' mercy me! Listen to the maid!" exclaimed Jacob, bursting into a fit of ironical laughter. "'I'll make ye,' says she. Look at her," pointing at the girl's slender form. "That be a good wun! I tell 'ee, Miss Masters, you'll find it a bit hard to make I do anything I've not got a mind to do."

Bethia took up a pod again and split it viciously. "I've got the Law at my back," she remarked.

"Ho! ho! ho!" chuckled Jacob, this time with unfeigned merriment. "Listen to her! The Law at her back, indeed! Such a little small back as it be! Why, maldy, I could jist finish ye off w' one finger!"

"I'm not talking of brute force," said Bethia, with flashing eyes. "The Law is stronger than you, Mr. Sibley. Now,



if you'll kindly go away and let me get on with my work, I'll be much obliged."

But Jacob did not take the hint. He sat down on the table instead, and watched the girl as, with an affectation of ignoring his presence, she moved about, filling her saucepan at the tap, peeling the potatoes, setting them on to boil. She did everything swiftly, deftly, and gracefully, holding her head very erect meanwhile, and being a little sharper in her movements than usual on account of her inward irritation. By-and-bye Mrs. Masters came creaking down the narrow stairs, and started back at the sight of the farmer.

"Dear! To be sure! I didn't know you had visitors here, Bethia, my dear. Won't you sit i' the armchair, Mr. Sibley? Do 'ee now. I'm sure 'tis very kind o' ye to come a-visitin' o' we in our trouble."

Bethia marched past her mother, removed the pot from the fire, and carried it over to the table.

"Could you make a little room, if you please?" she inquired tartly.

Jacob chuckled and rubbed his hands as he slowly removed his ponderous frame; then the remembrance of his former grievance returned to him, and he gazed at the widow loweringly.

"You don't like this here notion, Mrs. Masters, I hope?" he inquired severely.

"What notion, sir?" returned the poor woman, startled.

"Why, this here notion o' your daughter a-gaddin' about lookin' arter the rates."

"Well, you see, we be so hard pressed, we be," faltered she. "My daughter do try to do her best to earn a little all ways she can. I'm sorry as you've a-got objections, Mr. Sibley."

"It doesn't in the least matter if he's got objections or not," put in Bethia tartly. "It's no concern of Mr. Sibley's. So long as he pays up regularly himself he need not trouble himself."

Jacob got out of the armchair and once more approached the table.

"Now, look 'ee here," he said threateningly, "this here's past a joke. I do forbid ye for to do it—do ye hear?"

Bethia looked at him steadily. "I hear, and I can only repeat what I said before. Now, Mr. Sibley, will you please go away? I'm going to dish up."

"Bethia, my dear!" protested Mrs. Masters feebly. "There, she've a-got sich a spirit, Mr. Sibley, you must excuse her. She be a bit vexed, you see, w' you findin' fault w' her. I'm sure, the longer you stay, Mr. Sibley, the better we'm pleased. We've nothin' much fit to offer ye, but if ye'd like to sit down and take a bit w' us you're truly welcome."

Bethia shot an indignant glance towards her parent, and Jacob stood hesitating for a moment; then with a laugh he drew up his chair to the table.

"I'll not refuse a good offer," he said.

Bethia fetched a plate, knife and fork, and glass, setting each before him with somewhat unnecessary clatter. Then she served up the vegetables, brought out a roll of butter and a small piece of cheese from the buttery, and took her place in silence.

"I'm sorry," began Mrs. Masters regretfully, "we've got nothing better to offer ye, Mr. Sibley. My daughter and me seldom eats meat of a weekday."

"Don't make excuses, mother," interrupted Bethia, with asperity. "Mr. Sibley knows very well that we are poor."

The meal proceeded in silence for the most part, Mrs. Masters making an occasional remark, to which Jacob responded by a gruff monosyllable. Bethia did not speak once, but had never looked prettier in her life; the angry sparkle still lingered in her eyes, and her cheeks were flushed. Whenever she glanced at the visitor her countenance took on an additional expression of haughtiness.

At the end of the repast Jacob stood

up. "I'd like a word wi' ye private, Miss Masters."

"Oh, I beg pardon, I'm sure," apologized the poor old mother, hastening to efface herself.

As soon as her heavy footsteps were heard in the room upstairs the farmer turned to Bethia.

"I've a-come to see ye friendly like," he remarked, "and I'll come again. I ax ye, as a friend, my maid—will ye gle this notion up?"

Bethia looked if possible more indignant than before.

"No, Mr. Sibley," she returned promptly, "I tell you—as a friend—I won't."

"Then you'll ha' trouble wi' I, I warn 'ee," responded he, almost with a groan.

Jacob Sibley kept his word, and gave the poor little rate-collector an inconceivable amount of trouble.

He took no notice whatever of her demand notes and official reminders; and when she called to see him in person, though he received her with civility and even undisguised pleasure, he resolutely refused to part with a farthing. The friendliness with which he hailed her advent, and entered into conversation on indifferent subjects, gave place to a rigid silence as soon as she touched on the motive of her visit, and he would shake his head fiercely as often as she reverted to the point.

One day she found him in what she took to be a softened mood. It was in the spring, and the consciousness that it was grand weather for potato-setting, added to the recollection of a long and successful day's work, had put Jacob in an unusually good humor. He was smoking in his porch when she drew near, and at once invited her to sit down and rest.

"You do look a bit tired, my maid," he remarked; "tired and worried."

"I am tired and worried too," said Bethia, looking up at him appealingly.

"I'm afraid of getting into trouble, Mr. Sibley."

"Oh," said Jacob, "how's that?"

"They will be down on me for not sending in the money regularly," returned the girl tremulously; "I've got it all in except yours."

Jacob instead of immediately becoming wooden of aspect, as was his wont, gazed at her searchingly. "You'd be all right if you was to get mine?" he inquired.

"Yes—oh, yes, Mr. Sibley. Couldn't you pay up and have done with it?"

Jacob shook his head, but this time apparently more in sorrow than in anger.

"Can't be done, my maid. I've a-passed my word, d'ye see, and I be forced to stick to it."

"I think you are very unkind," said Bethia; "you are trying to force me to give up one of the few ways I have of making a living."

"Ee-es," said Jacob, "'tis true; 'tis the very thing I be a-doin'. You said if I didn't pay up you'd make me—well, how be you a-goin' for to make me?"

"Oh, I suppose I'll have to send you a summons," cried she, with gathering anger. "'Tis my duty and I must do it."

Jacob's face changed. The color mounted in his brown cheeks, and when he spoke his voice was unsteady with surprise and wrath.

"You don't mean that," he said quickly. "You'd never do it."

"I'll have to do it," said Bethia, "if you force me to proceed to extremes. Oh, Mr. Sibley," she added, almost passionately, "can't you be sensible; can't you make an end of it at once and for all? If I'd been a man instead of a girl you wouldn't persecute me like this. You'd think it quite natural for me to want to take my father's place, wouldn't you? What difference does it make? I can keep the accounts, and make the applications, just as well as

any man. Why should you try to bully me?"

"Now look 'ee here, my maid," said Jacob, "if you come to that, 'tis you what be a-tryin' for to bully I. I've a-set my face again this 'ere notion. No respectable young 'ooman did ought to go a-trapesin' fro' one house to t'other, a-puttin' herself for'ard and a-coaxin' folks out o' their money, whether it be for the Government or whether it bain't. 'Tis a question between us two which can hold out longest. Now if you was to give in to I——"

"Well," said Bethia, bending forward with unconscious eagerness, "what would happen if I were to give in to you?"

Jacob took out his pipe and stared at her, and then he got up and paced about the little flagged path.

"What would happen?" she repeated sharply. "What would you advise me to do?"

"Oh, I don't know," returned Jacob confusedly. "I haven't had time for to think o' that."

It was now Bethia's turn to spring to her feet. "I think you are hard, and obstinate, and cruel! Yes, cruel, to try and put upon my poor mother and me! But I'll have an end of this shilly-shally work; you shall be forced to pay, sir."

She hastened down the path. Jacob, after delaying a moment to lay his pipe carefully in a corner of the seat, strode after her and opened the garden-gate, holding it for a moment so that she could not pass through.

Bethia glanced at him. He did not look angry, but resolute; his jaw was firmly set and his eyes steady. It struck her forcibly that he had a good face—honest, open, manly—and she realized with a little pang that it was probably turned towards her for the last time in friendship.

"I'll give you a month," she said waveringly.

"Ye mid as well say a year," returned Jacob. "'Twill be all the same."

Thereupon he opened the gate and she went away.

The allotted time of grace passed very slowly, and though Bethia continued to post a little demand note every week, no notice was taken either of her appeal or of herself.

Late on the last day of the month she was making her way back from the town with a very melancholy face, when, at a turn in the road, she suddenly encountered Jacob; Jacob in holiday attire, carrying a large nosegay of monthly roses and lilac.

"Hulio, my maid," he cried genially, "well met! I were just a-goin' to see you."

"Were you?" returned Bethia, in a very small, constrained voice.

"E-es, I was a-bringin' you these here flowers. I seed 'em i' th' garden just now, and I thought you'd like 'em."

"Oh, Mr. Sibley, you shouldn't give them to me!" cried the girl with a catch in her voice. "I've—I've just been and taken out a summons against you."

"Oh, and have you?" said Jacob, staring at her. "Well, that's summat."

"Yes," returned Bethia desperately. "I waited till the end of the month, and then I had to do it; it was my duty. Oh, dear; oh, dear!"

"Well, to think on 't," said Jacob, still apparently more surprised than angry. "Lard ha' mercy! That be a pretty thing for a maid to do."

"So you'd best take back your flowers," broke out Bethia. "I know everything's at an end between us. I've quite made up my mind to it."

"Ah," said Jacob, eyeing her thoughtfully; "'tis queer once folks makes up their minds how a notion will stick i' their heads. Now all this month I've been a-thinkin' and a-thinkin'—I never was one to do a thing in a hurry—but at last I reckoned I'd got it settled. 'I'll do it,' I says, 'I'll ax the maid to

marry I—that'll be the best way out of it. She'll not want to go again I then," I says. "And you go and summons me."

Bethia burst out crying. "Oh, Jacob," she cried, "why couldn't you have done it before? If you had asked me kindly—if you had told me to give up for your sake, I—I—I—"

She broke off, sobbing bitterly.

"'Tis true," said Jacob regretfully, "I mid ha' asked ye a bit softer—I mid ha' spoke a bit more kind—but you did go and put my back up with stickin' to the notion so obstinate. Says I to myself, 'So soon as ever she gives in I'll ax her—but she must give in'—and you wouldn't. So then I thought—'Dally! I'll ax her first and then we'll see.' And then you go and put the Law on me afore I've time to open my mouth."

"Oh, Jacob! I waited a whole month," protested Bethia, almost inarticulately; "and you never said anything, and I thought you didn't care about me, and it seemed to be my duty."

She covered her face with her hands.

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Jacob stared at her for a moment, and then suddenly slapped his thigh and burst into a roar of laughter.

"I d' 'low the maid done it out o' pique," he cried ecstatically, "I d' 'low she did! She did do it along of her feelin's bein' hurt with me a-holdin' back so long. That's a different story, my dear—a different story altogether! I bain't one to bear malice along o' that; 'twas but naïtral arter all. E-es, I d' 'low I be a terrible slow coach; but, ye see, I'd a-got set I'm bachelor ways, and it did take I a long time for to make up my mind; and then, as I do tell 'ee, I wur a-waitin' and expectin' for you to give in. But I've spoke now, and if you'll say the word, my dear, all can be forgive and forgot."

Bethia presumably did speak the word, for she resigned her post as tax-collector that very evening, and she and her Jacob were "asked in church" on the following Sunday.

As for that matter of the summons, it was settled "out of court."

*M. E. Francis.*

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## THE TRUE ORDERING OF GARDENS.

"When ages grow to civility and elegance," said Bacon, "men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection." And then he unwittingly impales himself on the point of his own epigram; for he proceeds to lay out "a platform of a princely garden" which would have been intolerably stilted and modish. Even a golden intellect must bear the stamp of the currency of its time, and in Bacon's dream of a monotonous series of arches "upon pillars of carpenter's work," each crowned by "a little turret with a belly enough to receive a cage of birds," in

his "little low hedges, round like welts, with some pretty pyramids"; above all in the "fair mount," with its trim circular walk, which is to be the focus of the whole square garden—like a bull's-eye in the middle of a target—we see a horticultural replica of the starched formality of Elizabethan hoops and ruffles. Of course so great a mind could not revel among its own fancies of beauty without conceiving some pictures of delight; but the curse of a conventional age is over it all, and the general effect of Bacon's ideal garden—a sort of glorified tea-garden—would be simply irritating.

During the last few years most of us have strenuously revolted against convention in the garden, and the tyranny of the "carpet" flower-bed has been broken. But we are still slaves to the traditions of our hired servants, for the success of the revolt has merely modified our gardeners' methods of filling our flower-beds and has left the flower-beds. We have not liberated horticulture from the thralldom of ages because we have changed the color-pattern of its fetters. Yet to hear those talk who claim to be teachers in the new school, you would think that nothing better than their ideas can possibly remain to be discovered. All their jargon is of filling flower-beds with perennials and bedding plants, and edging plants, and all the rest of it; and they never seem to realize that before you can understand the meaning of natural beauty, as applied to a garden, you must realize that one or more plants placed in any kind of formal receptacle become *ipso facto* unnatural, no matter whether the receptacle be a flower-bed or a flower-pot. The shape or size of the bed makes no more difference than variations in the make of flower-pots. Yet there is not one person in twenty who does not think of flower-beds as the essential part of a garden; whereas all the best skill of modern horticulture is devoted, unconsciously, to the task of preventing the utter ruin of the garden's beauty by its flower-beds.

For what is a garden? I know only one word—an old-fashioned word—which expresses, to my mind, the nature of a true garden. It is a "pleasaunce," and as such generally attached to the house where its owner dwells. I do not count what is called the "kitchen garden" or "fruit garden" as part of the garden proper. Here utilitarian notions must be allowed to predominate; though, when space allows the luxury, without unduly di-

minishing the supply of fruit and vegetables, even these may be made beautiful with grouped flowers bordering the straight walks—which must be prosaically straight to save the gardener's time and help his work. On the other hand, gracious fruit-trees may well be introduced into sunny corners of the pleasure garden, provided that their cropping be subordinated to their beauty. This understood, a background of fruit to flowers adds often to the joy of a garden. I would even go further, and permit the invasion of the "pleasaunce," if its beauty in any feature might be enhanced thereby, by the culinary vegetable. The globe artichoke, for instance, with its grand acanthus-like foliage and noble blue thistle-heads, might touch the exact point of rugged stateliness demanded to complete some group of summer plants. But thus grown the artichoke would not be for cooking.

Having thus formulated your scheme of a garden, you must next consider the restrictions placed upon you with regard to it. The first essential of a man's house is that he must be able to get into it and out of it, and therefore, if the garden lies between the house and the road it must be intersected by one or more approaches. These need not be absolutely straight, nor, on the other hand should they be preposterously diverted in the way by which pretentious persons will make a garden all carriage-drive and accessories. Besides, a tortuous approach aggravates all who are in a hurry, and tempts many, especially boys and dogs, to make short cuts, with disastrous results to the plants. In the case of a garden which does not lie between the house and road or other place of regular resort you have a freer hand; but in no case should the ground be so laid out as to tempt the making of unauthorized paths to



any frequented point. The necessity for short cuts should be everywhere foreseen; and your ideal in arrangement should be to permit every part of it to be reached from every other part, either by a devious route which takes in all the intervening nooks of beauty, or by a path which is so direct as not to tempt even a person in a hurry to make a path for himself nor to irritate him by obstruction.

As most gardens will have been already laid out on a bad system, you may have to cut through shrubberies and existing flower-beds, and divert paths or drives, before this ground plan of your garden is satisfactorily complete; but, according to your means, do not hesitate to do boldly what may be necessary. Also, according to your means and the space at command, decide from the outset what landscape gardening, if any, must be undertaken. In very large gardens, of which a general view can only be obtained from an eminence, it may be necessary to interfere with the contour of the ground, and the beauty of a piece of water can sometimes only be thoroughly enjoyed from above. But an elevation of the ground, for every view that it gives you, obstructs several, unless it be placed on the margin of the garden: in which case care should be taken to place it and plant it so that it commands only desirable views of the surrounding country, or at least that no eyesores are visible from its summit. But in gardens of moderate size landscape work is out of place. It has a dwarfing effect upon the general area, and all the breaking-up of the horizontal line that is needed can be effected by the arrangement of shrubs and trees. This, however, does not apply to such slight irregularities of surface as may be created, with suitable drainage, for the welfare of ferns and moisture-loving plants, or for the creation of

rocky declivities where alpine flowers will be at home. And in the making of these the soil which is taken from one suffices to raise the other.

Before you proceed further, or before you have proceeded so far, important reservations from the space at command must be made for lawns. If these are to be used for games, they must not lie across routes which are likely to be in frequent use by those passing from one point to another, because traffic spoils the turf on the one hand, and on the other it is irritating to be compelled to make a detour. The lawns should, however, be situated within view of the windows of the more private reception-rooms, whence the games may be watched by those who are admitted to the inner family circle; but they should not be in view of the rooms to which strangers or unwelcome visitors are admitted. Yet in three-fourths of our modern gardens we see this simple rule of common-sense ignored.

And now, having arranged the general plan of your garden to satisfy all these requirements, it only remains for you to fill it with plants; and in doing this *make no flower-beds*. If, as is probable, you have come into possession of a garden with flower-beds already made, fill them up, not necessarily with turf, unless they are ill-placed, but with hardy perennial plants and flowering or evergreen shrubs and trees. Fill them up in such a way that the taller plants make not only a central ridge, but also buttresses, with nooks on either side, suited for lesser plants of different kinds according to the aspect. Allow each plant legitimate room for expansion, but no more; and in the case of plants of which you will allow the clumps to grow larger year by year, or which will hereafter grow tall with spreading branches, see that their immediate neighbors of value are not such as will be injured by removal

when necessary. From these taller plants the graduation should not be too primly exact; nor should it be abrupt, except where you wish to see the whole of some graceful growth. Otherwise it should lead easily down to the lowest creeping plants, which should meet the turf or the gravel, as the case may be. If the old flower-beds had any edging of box or tiles, &c., root it up without compunction. It is the rim of the flower-pot. And though at first, unless—as might be wiser—you deliberately cut into the turf or fill some parts of the flower-beds with grass, your plants will present the same stiff outline, you will soon find them invading the turf here and there. So far as your convenience in using the lawn or the path permits this must be encouraged by subtraction of the invaded grass, so as to permit the proper use of lawn mower or roller right up to the edge of the flowering plants. And here let me note that, although there is nothing more artificial in the whole range of gardening than a well-kept lawn, it has its counterpart in Nature, where the turf, close-nibbled by animals and springy with moss, forms a velvet surface, from which grouped vegetation stands out like rocks from the sea; and since in a garden we cannot keep the animals to nibble the grass, we must substitute the blades of the lawn mower for their teeth. It is the great reproach of horticulture that it has not yet produced a substitute for grass, or a variety of grass which will maintain the desired surface of green velvet without constant cutting. For so long as we are compelled to use a comparatively clumsy instrument for cutting the grass at frequent intervals, we must forego the immense advantage which Nature possesses in spangling her turf with tiny flowers and giving infinitely delicate variety of outlines to her groups of vegetation. There is no angle so small but that some tiny jaws can

work in it; whereas a lawn mower, many inches wide, must have blunt curves or straight lines; and of nicer scissor-work we must provide no more than we have hands to execute.

And now for the making of the garden. Its boldest features must, of course, be trees, singly or in groups or avenues. If trees already exist in the ground, consider carefully from all points of view which, if any, must be removed to add to the garden's beauty; but there should be no need for the caution that a tree which is felled in twenty minutes of haste may not be replaced by twenty years of care. Next consider what other trees and of what character would improve the garden, and plant them—as fine specimens as may be—without delay. Then, always balancing in your mind the fact that young trees will grow into old ones against your natural desire to have the whole garden beautiful at once, arrange your plan of lesser trees and shrubs, so that they may set off the beauty of the giants and enhance their own, by proper harmonies and contrasts of color, bulk, outline, and season. For though at first it might seem wrong to select two different shrubs with yellow flowers for juxtaposition, yet, if they bloom at different seasons, your choice may be perfectly correct. Again, though a tree with large leaves bulks largely in a group of vegetation, remember that if its leaves fall in winter such a tree becomes a skeleton. In the use of evergreens, again, you must consider how those of one group will stand in relation to those of other groups when the intervening and surrounding trees have shed their leaves. Two pyramidal cypresses, for instance, may thus be displayed one behind the other, than which there is hardly any blunder of arrangement more annoying to the eye. And whatever selection you may be inclined to make, it must always be subject to the cardinal condi-

tion of plant growth, so that when room is required the predestined victims may be removed, bringing your scheme of arrangement one stage nearer to the perfection at which it is aimed.

Thus to arrange a single group of shrubs and trees requires much thought and care; and to design a number of groups in harmony is the achievement of a great artist, like the composition of music which is beautiful in its parts and beautiful as a whole. But the beauty of the whole or of the main parts of a garden only strikes the consciousness of the observer now and then, when he deliberately takes a general view of the prospect; though unconsciously he is dominated by it all the time, as the broad effects of a painting or the main themes of an opera add significance to each detail of beauty in stroke of brush or bar of music. So the gardener must remember that, however fine his larger triumphs may be, they form but the setting to the clustered jewels with which he studs the earth; and for the welfare of these he must have so planned his groups of trees and shrubs that they will form bays which may be filled with an overflowing sea of color, nooks where tender plants may nestle while the cold wind shrieks by, niches of foliage where graceful models of the gardener's art may be enshrined, and promontories round which the hardier flowers may surge in breakers of bright hues. Shade must be provided for the host of lovely things that shun the noontide glare; and yet all must be so considered that at no season of the year will any corner of the whole be bare or ugly.

The conventional "flower-bed" is both bare and ugly at some seasons, though the skill of the gardener and the wealth of his employer may reduce the duration of each moult. But, had not custom made it familiar, it should seem

preposterous that men who pride themselves upon their gardens and spend much upon them should be content for days, if not weeks, at a time to gaze upon borders and flower-beds which are little else than patches of bare brown mould.

Now, in the garden whose arrangement in fancy I have been superintending, no mention has yet been made of "borders" or "flower-beds," beyond the suggestion that if these already exist in the garden before you commence to order it aright, they should be filled up. Both "borders" and "flower-beds" are disfiguring conventions, resulting, as do all conventions, from the fact that those who have the execution of what should be works of art—gardens to wit—are not artists, but a species of specially educated laborer or mechanic. If we could employ artists to hand-paint our walls, engrave our silver, weave our carpets, and so on, there would be no conventional designs anywhere. But the conventional rose on a cheap wall-paper differs no more sadly from the glorious flower than does the gardener's arrangement of his rose trees from true art. Look at them—standards and dwarfs and pillar roses—arranged at so much a dozen, in so many colors, with so many fancy names on labels, all complete! Maybe they would take prizes at a show; so would a pumpkin or a pig, if it were obese enough; and all that the gardener contributes to the success of the rose is conventional "treatment" and manure. In order to supply these with promptitude and despatch in a businesslike way he takes the rose and sticks it out by itself, or with others in a "rose-garden," where they stand in lines of assorted sizes like soldiers on parade. But the commonest method of displaying a rose is to grow it on the top of a bare stick and stick it up in a little round bed all by itself, a form of horticultural achievement which seems to have been

borrowed straight from the children's game of making mud-pies in rows, sticking a marigold blossom on the top of each, and calling it a "garden." Now, a rose is a beautiful thing, and its foliage makes a beautiful setting for the blooms; but the stems of the rose are not beautiful, nor is the earth in which it grows. Nature never intended you to see the stem of a rose, except perhaps in winter, when the plant is not dressed to receive visitors; and it is as improper and indecent to expose the nether part of the rose, all bare, as to present anything else which ought to be hidden to the public view.

Again, who has not had the experience of accompanying some proud rose grower round the prison where he keeps these half-naked beauties, and seeing him raise the drooping head of one after another to show you its full charm? It never occurs to that man, even if his dreams are of roses and the glories he may win with them at flower-shows, that those rose-blooms droop their heads because Nature has intended that they should be seen by the observer *from below*! Yet each face of peerless beauty mutely calls him "fool" as he raises it from its three-foot level to look up at him. He will glibly talk of himself in his garden "surrounded with roses" when he is nothing of the kind, having fixed them all down to about the level of his waistband, when he might have them above him and below him and all round him in beautiful truth. Take the common white cluster rose, or any rose of rambling habit. What is the meaning of that "rambling habit" of many plants, and why is it generally accompanied by another habit, of producing a sudden and short-lived flush of bloom, which makes the whole plant for a few weeks a thing of wonder and beauty, and after that—as usually grown in our gardens—an eyesore with its beggarly disarray of dead flowers? The meaning is very simple.

What we call "rambling" is the plant's device for covering the outside of other plants with its own strands, so that it may present its blooms to the sunlight; and the reason why rambling plants cover themselves all over with flowers for a short time only is because the other plants will not be denied their share of the sunlight, but push out their twigs in every direction between the rose strands, and, just as the latter finish flowering, the others cover them up with a decent veil of fresh greenery and other flowers, behind which the rambler matures its juices and lays out its plan of campaign for the next season. If you look at a fairly developed cluster rose, you will see that its main growth each year consists in throwing up long strands many yards in length. These supersede the wood of previous years, and as spring comes round they send out a flowering shoot, a foot or two long, from every leaf, and at the end of each shoot a great cluster of roses is formed. For the next year these strands are in turn superseded by still longer ones, which are sent up outside them. Now, what this cluster rose needs for its natural growth and full display, when at its best only, is a tree which makes less growth than the foot or two of its own flowering shoots before the end of June, but continues growing outwards and upwards after that, so as to provide support for the new strands and next year's supply of flowers. There are plenty of trees commonly grown in gardens which fulfil these requirements; and on one of these a cluster rose will, for the time it is in bloom, make a pillar of snow or pyramid of crimson glory thirty or forty feet high in any garden—such a sight as would be a landmark for a mile around. And after the rose had flowered, the tree would have its innings; and when the tree's leaves fell there would be the rose again clothing it with greenery—for the cluster rose is

evergreen—for the winter. The rose would not kill the tree, nor the tree the rose; for the latter has acquired its special characters for the purpose of “rambling” over living trees, and it would be the business of the gardener to watch the contest for sunlight and mark how it was affecting the vitality of either, always aiding the weaker, so that year by year the rose would smother the tree with flowers and the tree hide the withered blooms with green.

I have dealt in detail with the case of the common cluster rose, which is banished, as a rule, from gardens to some odd corner of a building, because it is a simple illustration of the advantage of growing a plant in its own way. We train ramblers, as a rule, over a dead wall or some arch, and then complain that they are unsightly after blooming and difficult to keep within bounds. Of course they are, for neither the wall nor the arch grows a couple of feet or so each year to hide the decaying blooms and supply fresh purchase for next year's wider, longer growth. But the secret of success is the same with all plants. Each one fights for its share of sunlight in its own way and its own season. The work of the gardener is so to accommodate their strife that each group of growing plants is always at its best, no matter what the season may be or which of the rivals may be in bloom.

Let us take one small corner of an imaginary garden and arrange it in fancy for a year. The ordinary way is to start in spring with an assortment of summer and autumn flowers, allowing the gardener, when these have finished blooming, to “do up” the beds for the winter; which means leaving them brown and bare, like so many mud-pies of symmetrical outline. As the last word of civilized gardening, the empty flower-beds of our parks and private gardens in winter would make that

“grand old gardener” Adam shake his head. They had no mud-pies in Eden. To avoid having them now you must—no matter at what season you may begin work—give your first and best thoughts to winter. In spring, summer, and autumn you have the whole florists' catalogues to fill your garden from; but for winter you must use both judgment and skill to have the ground decently robed in green, with such touches of color as the season and climate permit. The bareness of some trees will be inevitable against the sky; but conifers and evergreens may be so placed as to give substance and color to every group of trees; while the fall of the leaf in winter should be your opportunity to display the various ornamental ivies, which can be used to clothe with beauty the trunks and branches of all trees that are otherwise unsightly in winter. Ivy trained and trimmed on walls may be useful to hide brickwork, but it is only beautiful when it climbs in freedom. Some trees, however, such as red and yellow willows, dogwood, and so on, have bright-colored bark, and these should be placed judiciously to contrast with the deep-hued evergreens; and among the evergreens themselves the bright splashes of red and yellow berried hollies, the flame-berried pyracantha, and so on, must not be forgotten; while there are many climbing plants, besides briar roses, which retain some leaves as well as bright fruit in winter. There are winter-flowering plants, too, like winter jasmine, with its stars of gold, which are especially intended by Nature to scramble up among the summer trees, throwing out long strands which are covered from end to end with flowers after the sheltering trees have cast their leaves. Yet in our gardens you will always see the winter jasmine trained against walls, where it is ugly for half the year!

Coming to the lower level of the



shrubs, you still have embarrassing richness of choice in evergreens and dwarf conifers, as well as quite enough of sweet flowering shrubs and berried bushes to give color to the whole. By careful pre-arrangement and skilful use of rambling and climbing plants you will find that not more than one bush or tree in four need be an evergreen, nor more than one in twelve a winter-flowering plant. This will leave you two-thirds to select on the same plan for other parts of the year—one-third to make the garden beautiful in spring and early summer, and one-third for late summer and autumn; and by remembering that many plants have two seasons of beauty, with leaf and flower, or with flower and fruit, you may so often use the same plant twice, as it were, that in practice you will find that you may count upon at least half of the shrubs and trees taking part in your special scheme of color for each season. A garden thus arranged would continue to increase in beauty with recurring seasons, even without any added "garden flowers."

These, however, are necessarily the most important; and again you must think first of winter. For this season there are, firstly, the lovely Christmas rose, a queen of beauty in midwinter, and all through the summer making a lovely setting for brighter flowers with its glorious glossy leaves. There are also some crocuses, some very beautiful irises, which will flower freely in midwinter; and as they take up no room, if properly placed, in summer, they may be grown in generous clumps wherever the arrangement of evergreen plants and shrubs would form a graceful background to them. As with the cluster rose, you have only to understand the meaning of the habits of crocus and iris in order to grow them in abundance, to perfection, without ever having to "take them up" or to put up with the unsightliness of their de-

caying leaves, as happens now when bare beds are filled with irises or edged (!) with crocus. Could anything be more crude and barbarous than our gardeners' practice of using these jewels of beauty as a kind of trimming for the margins of brown patches of bare mould? Now, both crocus and iris and, in fact, all bulbous plants which flower in winter or spring are perfectly comfortable growing among other plants, which cover them over when their flowering time is over. It is exactly what they want; and there are scores of our prettiest garden plants which are especially fitted to do this. These are all the classes of plants which in winter have a low, matted growth of evergreen, a very few inches high, from which they send up an immense number of flowering stalks in summer, making a mass of bloom which may be a foot or more in height. According to this height should be selected the class of flowering bulb which they will protect. There comes a time, too, when these plants in their turn are glad to be overshadowed and protected—when they have shed their blooms and are resting before another season's growth. Then is the time when judiciously placed perennials, of the large class that dies down annually out of sight and sends up graceful stems with leaf and flower in season, fill the same site for the third time in the year with beauty; and by the time that they are cut down in autumn the plant below has got rid of its disfiguring seed-pods and withered flower-stalks, and forms a gracious green covering of the earth, through which the bulbs beneath are already stirring to thrust their way for winter flowering. Although you may not everywhere be able to get so many as three crops of flowers from the same space—though sometimes you may get four or more—you will everywhere find that you can make a perfect give-and-take arrangement for your flowers; and

especially you will realize the value of that large class of plants which we neglect so much and our fathers loved so well, namely, the biennials. These are plants which are grown one year in order to flower the next; and you will find that this habit has been acquired by Nature expressly to suit your purpose, namely, to fill the same spot of earth with beauty all the year round. According to their season of blooming you will sow the seed round some perennial that has almost reached its season's prime. The shelter of this plant is just what the seedlings require; and as soon as it begins to decline they are ready to take its place and cover the soil with their greenery all through the winter. Among them you will have planted bulbs timed to flower before or after them. If, for instance—to select common plants—the perennial is a redhot poker, which flowers in autumn, you could, if it were necessary to maintain the same scheme of color, use red and yellow tulips for early spring, the biennial red and yellow wallflowers for late spring, and red and yellow gladioli or gaillardias for summer, with the red and yellow redhot poker for autumn, dying down just in time to let a second crop of biennial wallflowers cover the ground with green for the winter, when the same sequence would be repeated. And this spot of red and yellow, lasting all the spring, summer, and autumn, might be the intense centre of a splash of yellow, easily arranged with, for early spring, the winter aconite, mid-spring, the yellow tulip, late spring, the gold-dust alyssum, and summer, any one of a host of vivid yellow flowers, with the dwarf perennial sunflower and early yellow chrysanthemum for sequence in autumn. So, if this yellow splash with its glowing centre of red and yellow was part of a larger chord in color, itself adroitly calculated to lead up to or down to other chords, making harmony through a vista, and each

vista, as it were, a bar in the whole garden's music, you need never go beyond the range of common hardy perennials.

But the greater art would lie, and perhaps the greater beauty be found, in arrangements which varied with the seasons; so that what was yellow here in spring—leading up to orange there, to culminate in scarlet when the highest note of the scheme was struck, sinking down again through waves of pink to a foamy sea of white—might as the seasons waxed or waned present soothing harmonies in blue, or any combination of colors, even to frank bizzarerie of kaleidoscopic tints. And in this blending of colors you will learn much from season to season, more often by accident than design. Here, for instance, is a combination of the commonest flowers—blue of cornflower, white of campanula, pink of Shirley poppy, orange of Iceland poppy, crimson-rose of godetia, and rich red-brown of calceolaria—which makes, for reasons which I cannot explain, a perfectly delightful hotch-potch of color in some sunny sweep of the garden. But add to it the yellow, say, of rudbeckia, and the whole arrangement becomes cheap and crude. In "carpet-bedding" many happy combinations have been discovered, and are repeated over and over again. You see them *ad nauseam* in one garden, and find them again in the next. It is like the jingle of a tune—pretty when you first hear it, but intolerably irritating when you find an organ-grinder playing it in every other street. But in your own garden there is added pleasure when you know that in the music of the seasons you can, if you wish it, hear the same new chords again.

There are some things, commonly regarded as mere accessories in a garden which are vital to its enjoyment as a "pleasaunce"; and the most urgent of these is the provision of well-placed

seats. No garden is so small that its enjoyment is not doubled by at least two garden seats—one for the enjoyment of the sun in the mild days of winter and spring, and the other for shade in summer and autumn. Both must command good perspective views, and must be placed with regard to the avoidance of wind in the winter seat and the enjoyment of the breezes in summer. In a garden of moderate size the seats may be so multiplied that every variety of weather and every aspect of the place may be enjoyed from one or other of them. Provided that they are naturally arranged, you cannot have too many seats in a garden, either for enjoyment or ornament.

Another matter, which is really of primary importance in a garden, but usually overlooked, is the encouragement of bird-life. There are many fruity trees, such as the mountain ash for starlings and thrushes, or the yew for the same birds and hawfinches, which will make any corner of any garden a focus for the bird-life of the neighborhood. There are also special flowering plants, such as the cornflower for goldfinches, the opium poppy for bluetits, or the godetia for redpolls, which soon become the resort of particularly pleasing kinds of birds. In addition, a little forethought and care in providing suitable nesting-places will attract many kinds of birds to make their homes in your garden. There is no backyard where—*pace* the cat—the robin will not build if the conditions are favorable; and is there any flower which gives such pleasure to a garden's owner as a robin's nest? Are we not all one at heart with that owner of a palace who for a whole season admitted his guests by a side entrance, a

wren having built her nest in the hinges of the great gate during its temporary disuse? Was not even a sparrow's untidy nest left untouched this year because it had built in the crown upon His Majesty's gate at Sandringham?

And after the birds come the butterflies—though, as a matter of fact, it is perhaps more often the birds which go after the butterflies. There are some flowers which the butterflies love; and that these are mostly good old-fashioned English flowers gives additional reason for their cultivation. These old flowers obtained their pre-eminence, in days when scientific horticulture was unknown, by strict attention to the tastes of English insects; whereas the modern florist's flowers appeal only to special foreign insects, or have been developed by human selection, with no regard to insects of any kind. The result is that you may any day see a sun-splashed butterfly pass a whole flower-bed, blazing in the glory of the gardener's art, and descend to some pretty English blossom on the lawn so small and humble that it has escaped the lawn mower. The fact that butterflies' tastes are not ours militates against the subordination of the whole garden to their conservative leanings; but he who sets apart a "butterfly corner" in his garden, and cultivates it intelligently will have no reason to regard his labor as wasted.

Thus with the living charm of bird and insect, the harmonies of color, the comforts of shade, and the varied views of beauty from every point, with facility of transit and seductions to loiter, with the changing glamour of changing seasons and the luxury of well-placed seats in proper nooks, a garden may be made a pleasure indeed.

## ANCIENT ROME IN FICTION.

It is an obviously true if somewhat trite observation that our attitude towards the ancient Græco-Roman world has changed materially during the last forty years or so. We know more about that world, and the knowledge, such as it is, is more widely distributed; and familiarity has bred, not indeed, contempt, but a certain decrease of reverence. That vague traditional sentiment of superstitious veneration, which gave a kind of superhuman magnitude to the heroes of antiquity and all that pertained to them, has gone the way of most superstitions. Sober reason and the Historical Method have opened our eyes to the fact that these great ones were after all men of like passions with ourselves. Some have been dethroned from their pedestals, others raised from the abyss; we are taught to know now that Cicero was only an advocate, and not a very good one; and to recognize the "essentially bourgeois" element in the tragedies of Sophocles; Tiberius is whitewashed, and there is a good deal to say for Caligula. In short, they all belong to a world like our own, where no one is wholly good or entirely bad; and as a consequence the golden age of the classics—the period of halo and glamour—is over; antiquity and the language of antiquity has lost its inspiring magic; we live in the midst of *Realien* and (as we are told that Pompeius entered the mysterious temple of Jerusalem only to find "*vacuas sedes et inania arcana*") so the substitution of the realistic for the conventional has brought with it a certain inevitable measure of disillusionment. It is much now if we write even an epitaph in Latin. Parliamentary eloquence no longer clinches its arguments beyond refutation with quotations from

the second book of the *Æneid*; nor do military veterans in these latter days, like Rawdon Crawley, advise their offspring to stick to the classics, my boy, because there's nothing like 'em. Alas! there are a number of things "like 'em" now—only more so.

This is a change which has notably affected the "fictional" treatment of subjects taken from the domain of ancient history. And here it must be understood that we are speaking primarily and mainly of the Roman and not the Hellenic world. For various reasons, novelists have rarely, if ever, drawn on Greek history for inspiration. Greek has always been to a certain extent a *terra incognita*, the property of your Porsons and such like, a thorny subject and dangerous to meddle with. Here and there the researches of a "Ouida" may enable her to head a chapter with the fascinating title "*Thalassia! Thalassia!*" or to dwell fondly on the heroic days when the "*Io Triumphe*" echoed up the vineclad slopes of the Acropolis; but for the most part novelists, knowing their public and its limitations, have been wisely content to deal with the merest commonplaces of Greek history—*Thermopylæ*, *Socrates'* draught of hemlock, and so on—and this only by way of casual allusion. The Latin world, on the other hand, has always had a strong hold on popular sentiment; the British public has always, by a convention, "known" certain periods in Roman history: which indeed is the defence which protects Latin at the present day from the attacks which are daily made upon Greek. Every argument used against the teaching of the latter language could be equally employed against the necessity of the former. But Greek is

suspect, as the property of mere scholars; Latin is defended by a remnant of the belief that every gentleman knows his Horace.

Moreover, to take the story-writer's point of view, what period has Greek history to offer like the (for purposes of fiction) wholly admirable first century of the Christian era at Rome? It is only, perhaps, rather strange that more use has not been made of such possibilities as must be offered by the Rome and Italy of that epoch, with its—even to these prosaic days—almost too strong contrasts of light and shade; its great city, the capital and centre of the world; its vicious Court; the overgrown luxuries of its society, described and denounced by satire; its men, the very types of so many heroes of modern fiction, "*pravi aut industrii, eadem vi*"; its tyrants and martyrs, its effeminate desperadoes and virile debauchees—all these brought into the most picturesque relations with the New Religion, already blending with and modifying the society and the culture of its persecutors, pure amid corruption, martyred yet triumphant, conquered but destined to conquer. Surely never was such material ready to the hand of a practised story-teller, who, indeed, if he chose could find a score of plots ready-made in the pages of Tacitus. Consider, moreover, that the public is so familiar with the leading characteristics and the prominent figures of this time that the novelist may adorn his pages with all kinds of classical material, yet never be under the painful necessity of explaining to his readers who Juvenal was, or what is the precise meaning of, say, "*Morituri te salutant*;" and it is small wonder that Imperial Rome—with its gallery of such attractive figures as the Bad Emperor, the Dying Gladiator, the Supple Greek, and the inevitable but always charming Christian maiden—should have furnished the plot of at least three popular stories

within the last sixty years. It is not remarkable that we should find the same subjects, and essentially the same characters, treated in the fiction of the early and middle Victorian periods and by the stern Slavonic muse of M. Sienkiewicz.

But the change above noted has had its effect here; and the method of treatment is different. Our rude forefathers were quite satisfied with the "*Last Days of Pompeii*." That was the period when a divinity still hedged the classics; and a public penetrated with the sense of that vague intangible atmosphere of majesty could not fail to admire Lytton, with his large, ornate, sounding periods, and his characters always (as it were) in full dress—quite after the fashion of the toga-draped and laurel-wreathed "*ancient Roman*" with whom one is conventionally acquainted. What the reading public wants or did want is romance with enough of classical atmosphere to produce the sensation that a classical education has not been all in vain; and that is what Lytton gave his contemporaries. Even now, with the True and the Beautiful writ large upon its face—with its impossible excesses of vice and virtue, with its tendency to become lyric in and out of season, and its melodramatic situations and rhetorical commonplaces continually challenging the hypertrophied critical faculty of the twentieth century—even now the "*Last Days of Pompeii*" is astonishingly readable. Moreover Lytton was himself a sufficiently good scholar to realize the dangers of excessive detail; which, indeed, his public did not require of him. He is content on the whole with a general air of classicism; when he does condescend to particular manners and customs it is but seldom that he need jar on the nerves of the learned Latinist. This is perhaps more than can safely be said for Whyte Melville. It would be ungracious to disparage so excellent



a novel as "The Gladiators"; but its excellence depends not at all on the accident of its plot being laid in the years 69 and 70 A.D. The impassioned classical temper of Lytton is absent. The "dark Egyptians" and Christian maidens who move through the "Last Days" have this at least in common with one conception of antiquity, that they are imagined in a kind of Lyttonian "grand style;" whereas the noble sportsmen who fill the thrilling scenes of "The Gladiators" are essentially the same as those whom we meet on Exmoor in "Katerfelto" or on the pastures of Leicestershire in "Holmby House." Truth to say, the conditions of his period sit rather light on Whyte Melville, and he makes sad work (if it mattered) with *Realien*. It does not do to call one of your heroes "Caius Lucius Licinius" (still less "Caius L. Licinius," as if he were an American), nor to describe him as "General, Prætor, Consul, Procurator of the Empire." As for augurs casting horoscopes, or generals (under the Empire) enjoying a triumph, or persons of fashion driving chariots through the streets of Rome by daylight—well, University Extension has taught us all better than that. This kind of thing was the fearless old fashion. Before inaccuracy became a punishable offence, women, as one would expect, were more courageous in this matter than mere men. It is, we believe, the talented authoress of "Idalia" (whose reverence and enthusiasm for the classics is not always according to knowledge) who has dowered Latin nomenclature with the delightfully modern name "Arria Paetus" (the wife, of course, taking her husband's name), a reference to "the Scipii and the Julii," and the memorable historical portrait of "Cicero murmuring 'Vixerunt' as he murders Lentulus." It may have been the same hand—or again, it may have been a parodist—that drew "That Venus when Milo fashioned *pour se désen-*

*nuyer* in exile at Marseilles." But—besides the undoubted fact that the gifted authoress of the description of a steeplechase in "Under Two Flags" is no mere slave to pedantic accuracy—one has to remember that the public has not always taken its classical culture in a strictly scholarly spirit. Some, perhaps, may remember how the yearnings after scholarship, as fostered by the "Classics for English Readers" were satirized by the Dublin University *Kottabos*:—

Back to youth I seem to glide, as  
I recall those peaceful scenes,  
When we quoted Thucydides  
Or recited Demosthenes:  
Sobbing slow, like summer tides,  
Flow thy verses, Euripides!

Modern culture demands a sterner temper. It is a far cry from "The Gladiators" to "Quo Vadis"—perhaps the most courageous historical novel ever written, inasmuch as its protagonists—or at least some of its most important characters—are actual historical personages. But the fact really necessary to observe from our present point of view is, that these personages are not idealized portraits, but, apparently, are deliberately drawn on the lines of the existing authorities; surrounded by a setting of supported and justified detail which, perhaps inevitably, tends at times to become excessive, so that one is occasionally reminded of that highly educative work of fiction, Becker's "Gallus." This is the essential point; that M. Sienkiewicz has created a Nero in the temper of an historian rather than of a novelist, simply by steeping himself in the necessary authorities—not merely glancing at them now and then like Lytton, or using them to heighten the interest occasionally, like Melville. This is the classical fiction which public opinion now requires—realism here as elsewhere; in describing the ancient world, the same laborious attention to microscopic detail which a

certain school of American fiction bestows on the manners and customs of a particular district in a particular State. In all probability this means that we have heard the last, for some time at any rate, of essays in "classical" fiction. The burden laid on the story-writer will be excessive; it is no light matter to be the Flaubert or the Zola of antiquity. M. Sienkiewicz may possess, in addition to the novelist's other necessary qualifications, the erudition which can describe a Roman dinner without offending Professor Mayor;

*The London Times.*

but he is probably unique. In an age of specialism, scholars will not often be novelists nor novelists scholars; and obviously, having now set the standard of accuracy, we cannot be content with a relapse into the easy-going conventional method which was good enough for our fathers. Exact scholarship has taken the place of the fine careless raptures of the earlier nineteenth century; the *Io Triumphe* is not likely again to echo up the vineclad slopes of the Acropolis.

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## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

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Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin's "Penelope's Irish Experiences" will be published this fall in a holiday edition with illustrations by the English artist, Charles E. Brock.

A London publisher remarks that "Five out of every six novels published barely pay; three out of every six are absolute failures." This may be depressing to would-be authors, but the average reader will regard it as retributive justice.

Mr Lawrence Housman is at last the acknowledged author of the "Englishwoman's Love-Letters." He is about publishing a translation in prose and verse from the old French of "Of Aucassin and Nicolette", together with "Amabel and Amoris", now given for the first time.

To the question lately under discussion why the inhabitants of Scotland prefer the use of the adjective "Scottish" to "Scotch" a Scot makes what may be regarded as a final answer:

"The reason is that Scottish is the right and "Scotch"—which is a pure Anglicism—is wrong."

In "The Affirmative Intellect" Mr. Charles Ferguson takes up the parable which he began some time ago in "The Religion of Democracy" and essays to give an account of the origin and mission of the American spirit. There are some striking suggestions, and some very pungent sentences, but the author seems too intent on being clever to take the trouble to be clear; and his book is likely to be "caviare to the general," which seems a pity since he feels that he has a message. The Funk & Wagnalls Co.

"Rataplan, a Rogue Elephant" is the title story of a volume of fresh and striking tales of animal life,—a little in the Thompson-Seton vein, but less fanciful and better adapted to the understanding of child readers, whom they cannot fail to please. The author is Ellen Velvin. She is endowed with no little quaintness and humor of style

and a clear comprehension both of animal traits and childhood tastes. If there is a dash of sadness in most of the stories, that perhaps is because the serious dominates the trivial in animal not less than in human life. There are illustrations in color by Gustave Verbeek. Primarily appealing to young readers, like most really good children's books it will be found interesting by older readers as well. The Henry Altemus Company.

A recently published volume entitled "How to Make an Index" contains some amusing examples of the vagaries of index-makers, especially in cross references. Here are some diverting specimens from the index to Serjeant William Hawkins's "Pleas of the Crown":

"Cards *see* Dice."  
 "Cattle *see* Clergy."  
 "Chastity *see* Homicide."  
 "Cheese *see* Butter."  
 "Coin *see* High Treason."  
 "Convicts *see* Clergy."  
 "Death *see* Appeal."  
 "Election *see* Bribery."  
 "Farthings *see* Halfpenny."  
 "Fear *see* Robbery."  
 "Footway *see* Nuisance."  
 "Honor *see* Constable."  
 "Incapacity *see* Officers."  
 "King *see* Treason."  
 "Knaves *see* Words."  
 "Letters *see* Libel."  
 "London *see* Outlawry."  
 "Shop *see* Burglary."  
 "Sickness *see* Bail."  
 "Threats *see* Words."  
 "Westminster Hall *see* Contempt and Lie."  
 "Writing *see* Treason."

The latest volume in the Macmillans' "English Men of Letters" series, Mr. Augustine Birrell's "William Hazlitt" is one of the most delightful. It might not be impossible but it certainly would be difficult for Mr. Birrell to write a dull book. At all events, he has not done so in this case. The chequered career and voluminous literary produc-

tiveness of Hazlitt have given him a congenial theme. His interpretation and estimate of Hazlitt's literary work are just and sympathetic, and he treats the less admirable portions of the author's career with a whimsical disapproval which is more effective than formal censure. Here and there are touches of playfulness which are Mr. Birrell's own, as for example when he remarks that "the most stilted of heroines, the palest of sentimental shadows, could always be relied upon to trundle her hoop into Hazlitt's heart." Mr. Birrell's volume is acceptable for itself, and it will be doubly valuable if it turns readers anew to the really noble eloquence and fruitful criticism which are to be found in Hazlitt's essays.

Paul S. Reinsch, professor of Political Science in the University of Wisconsin, is the author of a volume on "Colonial Government" in the "Citizen's Library" of the Macmillans, which is particularly useful and timely. The United States is just entering upon the experience of the administration of distant dependencies; but, novel as the experience is to Americans, in its essence it is not unlike that of England, France and other countries with extensive colonial possessions. Unless we are to insist on making our own blunders for ourselves it is worth while to profit by what others have learned in the same field. To this end, the study of Professor Reinsch's volume, with its clear account of the forms and institutions of colonial government as established by other nations, furnished with sufficient details but not overburdened with them, and offering a bibliography which aids further investigation, will be found helpful and illuminating. Professor Reinsch holds out the promise of a second volume in which the particular problems of colonial administration will be dealt with.

THE WELL O' THE WORLD'S  
END.

Beyond the four seas of Eri, beyond  
the sunset's rim,  
It lies half forgot, in a valley deep and  
dim;  
Like a star of fire from the skies' gold  
tire,  
And whoso drinks the nine drops shall  
win his heart's desire—  
At the Well o' the World's End.

What go ye seeking, seeking, seeking,  
O girl white-bosomed, O girl fair and  
young?  
"I seek the well water, the cool well  
water,  
That my love may have love for me  
ever on his tongue."

What go ye seeking, seeking, seeking,  
O lad of the dreaming eyes, slender  
lad and tall?  
"I seek the well water, the cool well  
water,  
That the colleen I love best may love  
me best of all."

What go ye seeking, seeking, seeking,  
O, mother, with your little babe,  
folded on your arm?  
"I seek the well water, the cool well  
water,  
That nine drops upon his lips may  
shield my child from harm."

What go ye seeking, seeking, seeking,  
O gray head, long weary of the vigil  
that ye keep?  
"I seek the well water, the cool well  
water,  
That nigh it I may rest awhile, and  
after fall asleep."

*Anna McManus.*

DEEMING DALE,

Who is it knocks at my window? Ho,  
Who is it rides the gale?  
"Yonder the Pitiless Ladies go  
Adown the Deeming Dale.

"The cold of a cloud is over them;  
Open the pane and see;  
All the women of perilous dream  
Go drifting drearily,

"One by one on the bitter wind,  
Companionless and gray,  
With the empty sound of a host behind  
To bring them on their way.

"But yonder, yonder comes the Moon,  
And yonder see them turn:  
Jewelled and fierce their hunting shoon  
Fly flashing through the fern."

Now whither do they ride so fast  
Upon the whirling wind?  
"Fasten the pane against the blast!  
Hasten and draw the blind."

Who is it knocks at my window? Ho,  
Who is it rides the gale?  
"And who would join the hosts that go  
Adown the Deeming Dale?"

*Richard Ashham.*

A VISION OF ENGLAND.

For where, remote from smoke and  
noise,  
Old Leisure sits knee-deep, in grass;  
Where simple days bring simple joys,  
And lovers pass.

I see her in those coming days,  
Still young, still gay; her unbound hair  
Crowned with a crown of starlike rays  
Serenely fair.

I see an envied haunt of peace  
Calm and untouched; remote from roar,  
Where wearied men may from their  
burdens cease

On a still shore.

*Emily Lawless.*

IDEAL.

The song unsung more sweet shall ring  
Than any note that yet has rung;  
More sweet than any earthly thing.

The song unsung!

A harp there lies, untouched, unstrung,  
As yet by man, but time shall bring  
A player by whose art and tongue  
This song shall sound to God the King;  
The world shall cling as ne'er it clung  
To God and heaven, and all shall sing  
The song unsung.

*Hugh Cochrane.*